"Sky Train" Flies Over the Atlantic

Loaded Air - Freight Glider Towed for 3,500 Miles

A freight-loaded glider was recently towed across the Atlantic in a successful test of a "sky train" technique opening great possibilities in air transport, the Air Ministry disclosed. Two of the four pilots in the trail-blazing experiment were Canadians.

The glider was loaded with vaccines for Russia, radio, aircraft and motor parts, and was towed by a twin-engined Douglas C-47 transport, a type which the Air Ministry calls Dakota. It completed the 3,500-mile journey in 28 hours.

Planned by Sir Frederick Bowhill, commander-in-chief of the R.A.F. Transport Command, preliminary experiments were carried out with test hops near Montreal for months before the big transport and its glider headed for the Atlantic crossing.

Had Rough Crossing

The glider used had a wing-span of 84 feet, a freight capacity of 3,000 pounds and was fastened to its mother ship with steel attachments designed to take a strain of 20,000 pounds.

Pounding its way through bad weather most of the time, the transport and its following glider made the trip at medium altitudes and at an average speed of 125 miles per hour.

Unable to climb out of the storms encountered on the way, the two craft made a rough crossing. At one time they were forced to ride out a snowstorm for 2½ hours, when the glider was buffeted "like nothing on earth."

No Automatic Pilot

Several interesting generalizations about long glider flights were made available in connection with the landing. For one thing, it was emphasized that the glider must be flown all the way—there is no automatic pilot—and the pilot must not for a second take his eye off the tow plane or the tow rope if the plane is in clouds.

When the motored plane is in clouds the glider pilot gauges things by the so-called "angle of dangle," in other words, the angle made by the tow rope. The glider should preferably be flown about 20 feet above the tow plane.

The take-off is the most difficult part of the flight. The glider becomes airborne before the tow plane, and should the pilot allow it to get too high the tail of the latter might be pulled up so that the whole take-off would be ruined. Similarly, if in flight the glider gets too low a drag on the low plane's tail may cause a dangerous stall.

The glider crew finds life very noisy despite the absence of motors. One flier who made this crossing compared the roar to the sound of a freight train on worn tracks—the steady beating of the wheels over the joints.

The crews communicate via ordinary wireless, but the switches are kept off to save batteries, and when the tow plane wishes to speak to the glider the pilot waggles his wings.

Hail To The Pig! He Does His Bit

A Tribute In The Leamington Post and News

The pig—look at him. He roots in the swill pail, he rolls in the mud puddle, he smells like something putrid. You say, "Ugh, the filthy animal." And then he dies. And he becomes a benefactor. Someone twists a rope around his leg and shoos him up an inclined plane to the spot where a man smoking a pipe waits to cut his throat. And, still squealing in a diminishing gurgle, he drops down into the pit. . . .

Now look at him. He comes to your table in long, thin bacon strips, in delicious chops, in tender roasts, in succulent spareribs. He covers your hands and feet with his tough, durable hide. He lingers in the bottle of glue on your writing table. And he goes to war. He wraps his fat around the men who fight in Arctic cold. The Commandos shiver a little less because of that protecting fat layer. In icy water, clinging to a raft, the survivors are those with the most natural warmth, part of it gained from the pig.

When airplanes shoot straight and fast and enemy 'planes fall from the sky, the cartridges have his impress. His essence is in the huge shells that demolish the deadly submarines. His greedy feeding, his strength and vigor and warmth, are helping to win the war. Hail to the pig!

Ban Kite Flying

Nazi occupation authorities have banned kite flying, a favorite pastime of the Dutch, according to the Netherlands News Agency.

THE WAR - WEEK — Commentary on Current Events

The Greatest and Most Daring Undertaking In Military History

The Allied armies, which began the Battle of Europe with an invasion of Sicily, have successfully accomplished what both Axis and Allied spokesmen agree in characterizing as the "greatest and most daring undertaking in military history." They have firmly established themselves on numerous beachheads along a 100-mile stretch of the Sicilian coast, and are now driving into the interior "according to plan," says The New York Times. More troops, more vehicles, more guns and stores and equipment are pouring into the island across a bridge of ships and under a canopy of protecting aircraft that have virtually blasted the Axis air force from the skies. The battle for Sicily may be arduous and protracted, but the beginning has been auspicious. As one Allied spokesman put it, the invasion has passed the "crisis point."

More To Come

Therewith the Western Allies, to whom Hitler referred not so long ago as "military idiots," have accomplished what Axis propagandists loudly proclaimed they could not do and what Hitler himself did not dare do. They have invaded enemy territory across a wider stretch of water than the British Channel — territory far more strongly defended than was England after Dunkerque.

They achieved this success with a military precision and co-ordination of all arms, including glider and parachute troops, unequaled in any military campaign. They proved themselves masters of military technique, superior to both the German and Italian defenders, who claimed a monopoly of that science. They demonstrated that amphibious operations, which failed at the Dardanelles and at Dieppe, are not only feasible but with the right technique can be not even very costly. Therein lies the guarantee that the Sicilian landing is merely the forerunner of more to come.

Other Second Fronts?

The anxiety of the Nazi who exclaimed, "Why don't the British and Americans come instead of talking about it all the time?" is now partially relieved. But the landings in Sicily do not give Berlin any assurance that there will not be other "second fronts" to deal with.

In some respects Sicily has seemed almost a sure thing—an inevitable first step, writes the war editor of The Christian Science Monitor. To the sea-minded British especially it stands as the key to the Mediterranean. So long as the Axis possessed air bases and harbors in the island, Allied shipping could never be wholly free from raids. With Sicily in Allied possession, not only is the sea clear but the Italian boot itself will lie under the imminent threat of invasion.

Nazi Dilemma

This will in turn present a difficult choice to Berlin—to be somewhat pulled off balance by sending large forces to defend a position far from the Nazi centre of strength, or permit Italy to become a base for Allied attacks on the Reich. In a measure, the landings in Sicily already offer the Nazis that dilemma. Apparently they have chosen to fight at least a delaying action in Sicily. But they must have the constant dread that, if they concentrate on the defense of Sicily, the Allies, under cover of their sea and air control in the Mediterranean and with greater mobility, may then strike some other spot left unprotected.

Divide the Defense

Almost surely the Allies will strike elsewhere. They will exploit their advantages by dividing the defense. So sure have the Nazis been that a blow was coming in southern France that they have moved the population out of Sete and other towns near the Spanish border. But a landing in France seems hardly an immediate probability. For one thing, French troops would surely play a major role, and General Giraud is in the United States. For another, General Eisenhower has just warned the French people to keep cool and wait for word from the Allies.

The Allies undoubtedly have not moved without good information and thorough preparation. The incessant bombing of Sicilian airfields and of Messina—gateway to the mainland—has destroyed or badly damaged vital links in the defense of the island. Sea and air control will give them immense advantages, and if this move has been managed with the same skill and co-ordination as that into North Africa, the defenders will have their hands more than full.

The Book Shelf

FIREDRAKE.

By A. D. Divine.

This is the story of a ship. They christened me Firedrake, which means "a mythical, fiery dragon." I'm a fighting ship and I've seen a lot of the world in my short life. I've been through several hells. I've been blown wide open and left for dead—but I'm still stubbornly alive.

The big convoy gathered in Gibraltar. The British Eighth Army was in desperate need of supplies. The enemy launched their attack. There was no escape. We knew the big one had our ticket on it—even before it landed.

The damage was unbelievable. The Admiral ordered "abandon ship," but my Captain refused to give up. The crew worked in darkness—water lapping at their heels—live steam everywhere. They shored the metal, stiffened my bulging bulkheads and somewhere kept me afloat. In two days they achieved the impossible—we were under way.

At the moment I am in America being completely overhauled and repaired. Soon I'll be on the job again.

Firedrake .....By A. D. Divine
Smithers & Bonelli ....Price $3.50

VOICE OF THE PRESS

THEY'RE SEEING THE WORLD

From "Somewhere in Australia" comes news of the arrival of a detachment of American soldiers from the Yukon, who since March 6 of last year have traveled 23,000 miles and have undergone 150-degree variations in temperature—from 68 below zero to the scorching heat of the Equator. "Join the armed forces and see the world" means what it says in this war.—Montreal Gazette.

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A "RIPPING" DESCRIPTION

We don't like to inflict this on you, but The Toronto Star likens the income tax to carpentry: "The taxpayer hammers away at the tackses, adze the figures and files the document. But if honest he doesn't chisel." That's quite plane, pal; if he wasn't square and on the level it wouldn't auger well for him. He'd have to brace himself for a bit of rasping.

—Ottawa Citizen.

—o—

GOODS NEWS

There are two more good things about the Chinese victory. One is that the Chinese are learning that they can beat the Japs, and the other is that the Japs are learning the same thing.

—Pathfinder.

—o—

MOTIVES

Scottish miners, to celebrate the victories in Tunisia by the armies, worked an extra day without pay. Ours go on strike to celebrate.—Brandon Sun.

—o—

TERRORS OF PEACE

And now we are told of a post-war $400 motor car to be sold at every gasoline station. Peace, too, can have its terrors!

—Ottawa Journal.

EXPLAINED

We read that the cloth saved from men's trouser cuffs would carpet a broad path from Toronto to Windsor. So that is what they are going to do with it!

—Peterborough Examiner.

—o—

MONEY TALKS, BUT—

Take a tip from money. It talks, but it doesn't give itself away.—Kingston Whig-Standard.

—o—

PRACTICAL POP

Some day some father is going to get smart and pass the hat instead of cigars when twins are born.—Guelph Mercury.

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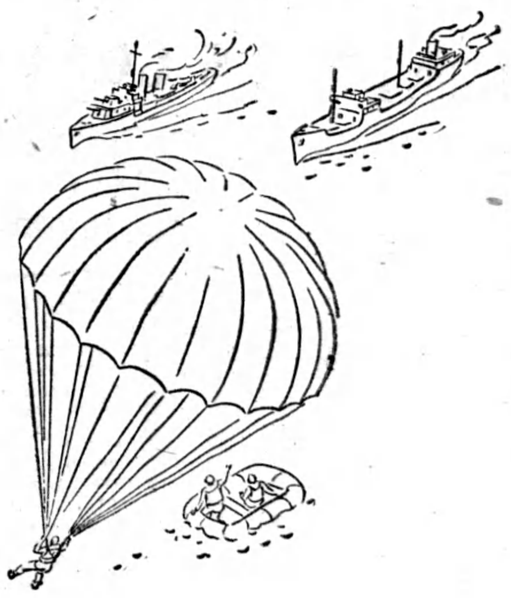

WATERWINGS ...1943 STYLE

Remember the water wings you used as a kid at the sea shore? Fighting airmen wear them too . . . 1943 style . . . as part of their standard equipment. When the flyer hits the water he wastes no precious seconds blowing up his "wings". He simply opens a valve in a small cylinder of compressed carbonic acid gas ...and his "CO_2 jacket" is inflated for him in a flash. This same useful gas is used to inflate the rubber boats and rafts which have saved so many lives in all the Seven Seas. Much of this gas comes from our plants, a by-product in the making of War Alcohol. Never before has the need for Alcohol been so urgent. Alcohol is a prime essential in the production of synthetic rubber, is an important ingredient for plastics, and is the constant ally of doctors and nurses in their fight against infection. Producing Alcohol is our one all-important war job. All of our plants are working to capacity to produce it.

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REG'LAR FELLERS—A Good Game

By GENE BYRNES