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THE SKYLINER

Vol. 8, No. 4 April, 1944

"SHE FLEW LIKE A DREAM"

Like A Preview of The Universe From A Ringside Seat

By Leo Baron
Manager TWA Public Information Dept.

Flying something like 2,400 miles in 418 minutes is like going to sleep and being awakened by a noisy telephone. You are startled by the suddenness of it. That was my reaction when the wheels of the Constellation touched ground at Washington National Airport, less than seven hours after we took off in the darkness at Lockheed Air Terminal, Burbank, Calif. It hardly seemed possible that a plane so big could shrink the continent with such impressive speeds. Yet it did just that, and without being pushed, for this was no official record attempt but merely a routine flight to deliver the plane to the U. S. Army Air Forces in Washington.

Weeks of preparation for the trip crystallized early Sunday evening, April 16, when Howard Hughes and Jack Frye decided to depart the next morning. The weather outlook was favorable. The plane had just returned from a flight from Las Vegas, Nev., and was pronounced mechanically fit. Orders were given to gas up, and crew and passengers were instructed to be aboard by 3 a.m. Besides Hughes and Frye as co-captains, crew members were Edward T. Bolton, navigator, R. L. Proctor, flight engineer, and Charles L. Glover, radioman.

Hughes was to fly the first half of the trip with Frye as his co-pilot and the TWA president was to take the controls at the half-way mark with Hughes serving as co-pilot. At the same point, Richard de Campo was to relieve Proctor as flight engineer.

Everything went according to plan. Promptly at 3 a. m. the passengers climbed aboard. There were 12 in all—

(Continued on page 3, col. 1)

The Constellation, new queen of land planes, zoomed across the girth of the nation this month in six hours, 58 minutes, setting a new transport speed record on her maiden flight from Burbank, California to Washington, D. C. Jack Frye, left, and Howard Hughes, right, co-captains of the trip are shown immediately after their arrival in Washington. Jesse Jones, center, Secretary of Commerce, was the first to greet the two pilots of the record flight.

An Open Letter to Employees

To TWA Employees:

The delivery flight of the Constellation was successful from every standpoint. Much was written about it in the newspapers and told over the radio. However, only half of the story was told. The other and more important half concerns those TWA employees who had a hand in the Constellation's development and care, both before and after the flight. To them, belongs a major share of the honors for the Constellation's achievements.

Space does not permit the mention by name of those who at one time or another, or in one degree or another, were involved in this enterprise. They could be counted, perhaps, in the hundreds.

(Continued on page 2, col. 1)

Visitors Applaud Giant Plane After Impressive Flight

BY ED BOUGHTON

Washington, D. C.—Acclaimed as the world's largest and fastest land based transport plane, TWA's Lockheed Constellation won the approval of thousands of visitors here at the Washington National Airport, where the forty ton airliner was exhibited following its impressive transcontinental delivery flight on April 17.

Ranking members of the armed forces, statesmen, and key figures in aviation circles boarded the Constellation for short flights after the huge transport crossed the continent in the published time of six hours and 58 minutes with Howard Hughes and Jack Frye alternating at the controls.

All marveled at the performance and size of this latest addition to the nation's fleet of air transports, which was turned over to the Army Air Forces by TWA. Under the army designation C-69, the Constellation is expected to be used to carry men and materiel to the war fronts, and provide swift and comfortable accommodations for the wounded on return missions.

The first public news of the routine delivery flight of the "Connie," came over wire and radio services, which reported the world's largest and fastest transport plane had left Burbank at 3:56 (PWT) Monday morning, April 17.

In the pilot's seat for the take-off was Howard Hughes, who, in a special monoplane had established the previous coast-to-coast record of 7 hours and 28 minutes between Burbank and Newark on January 19, 1937. Co-Pilot for Hughes on the first half of the Constellation crossing was Jack Frye. The two pilots changed seats mid-way across the continent with Frye bringing the Constellation into the Washington Airport at 1:54 P. M. (EWT).

(Continued on page 16, col. 1 and 2)

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Army Men and Statesmen Inspect Ship

Among the persons who congratulated Jack Frye upon the arrival of the Constellation at the Washington National Airport were, left to right, Col. Frank H. Collins, Commanding Officer, ATC, Washington National Airport; Oswald Ryan, (Jack Frye) and Josh Lee. Ryan and Lee are members of the Civil Aeronautics Board.

Let's Bring the Wounded Home

Following the Constellation flight, Jack Frye made the following address over the Columbia Broadcasting System's "Report to the Nation" program, on the evening of April 18:

"The flight which Howard Hughes and I made yesterday was for the purpose of delivering this new airplane, known as the Constellation, to the United States Army Air Forces. This is the first of a number of Constellations which we are turning over to the Air Forces.

"On this flight yesterday, we did not deliberately set out to establish a new transcontinental record. The trip was made in 6 hours and 58 minutes simply because the Constellation was designed and built to fly at such remarkable speeds. The flight was normal in all respects. We sincerely hope and believe that these airplanes will be a valuable contribution to the war.

"The Constellation is a great deal faster than any other transport in the world. In fact, it is faster than a Japanese Zero pursuit plane. Outbound from the United States, the Constellation can be used to carry troops and vital military equipment to any place in the world where they may be urgently needed. On such missions, the Constellation's ability to fly in the sub-stratosphere, and at exceedingly high speed, will greatly lessen the danger of interception by enemy fighters.

"On the return flights home this airplane will be particularly useful in evacuating our wounded. With the Constellation, wounded can be transported a great distance in a very short period of time, and with maximum safety.

"This can be done at very high altitude where the air is completely smooth and free from turbulence. No adverse effects due to altitude will be felt by the wounded because of the pressure cabin. In many cases, severely wounded men cannot stand the roughness and jolting, nor the time required for ordinary air transportation.

"I have been asked when the public may expect to fly across the country in this airplane and when, through its performance, 8 hour Los Angeles to New York schedules may be expected.

"In my opinion, when the war is over, the first thought of all of us should be to bring our wounded back home. The Constellation should be used for this purpose before any other."

(Continued from page 1, col. 3)

They represented all departments of the company—engineering, legal, maintenance, operations, personnel, traffic, treasury, war projects, and executive. Had anyone shirked their assignment, the results might have been otherwise.

To the Johnny Guys, Lee Spruills, Lawrence Chiappinos, Bob Loomises, Jay Jacksons, Dan Phillipses and all the others, we extend our heartfelt thanks.

HOWARD HUGHES
JACK FRYE

Airplanes Should Fly Themselves

Some 41 years ago Orville Wright piloted the first heavier-than-air flight. This month he piloted the Lockheed Constellation, the world's largest transport plane for a few minutes over Wright Field, near his home town of Dayton, O. The wing-span of the Constellation is 123 feet, three feet longer than the distance Wright covered in his first historic flight in 1903.

According to a news release from the Associated Press, his turn at the controls of the Constellation during a 50 minute flight was his first spell of piloting in 25 years and his first trip aloft since 1939.

"The 73-year-old veteran of aviation" the story said, "took a demonstration hop in the mammoth transport after the big ship flew in from Washington —by way of New York and Paterson, N. J.—in two hours and four minutes. When he descended he said, 'I enjoyed every minute of it.'

" 'And,' he gloated, 'I guess I ran the whole plane for a minute but I let the machine take care of itself. I always said airplanes would fly themselves if you left them alone.' "

Hughes and Frye Are Lauded In Congress for Vision and Initiative

The Constellation's record breaking transcontinental flight has been recognized in Congress as being the result of the initiative and vision of the two men, Jack Frye and Howard Hughes, who conceived and jointly piloted this new transport plane on the historic trip from Burbank to Washington.

Quoting from the Congressional Record of April 18, the following remarks were made by Rep. J. Buell Snyder of Pennsylvania:

"Mr. Speaker, in 1937 a hard-working young man endowed with much initiative and creative ability designed and had built a worthy service airplane in Los Angeles, Calif., and flew to New York in 7 hours and 28 minutes. No other man has been able to equal that record to date.

"Five weeks ago today I visited the Lockheed factory located at Burbank, Calif., with this same forward looking and patriotic gentleman, Howard Hughes. We went through and inspected and observed the Constellation, the big plane designed by Mr. Hughes that landed at the National Airport yesterday after a flight of only 6 hours and 58 minutes.

"Mr. Speaker, this huge transport is the largest land plane ever built. Mr. Hughes built it over the same design that he used in building his small plane in 1937. Another remarkable trait of this philanthropist is that he not only flew around the world in the shortest time, but piloted this big plane with Co-Pilot Jack Frye, on its history-making trip yesterday. I am sure you join with me in congratulating not only Mr. Hughes and Mr. Frye, but the management and labor force that built this giant of the air.

"In less than a year we will witness Mr. Hughes and Mr. Frye flying an air giant three or four times the size of the Constellation from California to the Washington Airport in less than 6 hours and 58 minutes."

Representative Snyder was followed on the floor of the House by Rep. Warren G. Magnuson, of Seattle, Washington, who said:

"Mr. Speaker, portending what is to come in the future air world, I received an air-mail letter last night which was placed in my box at the hotel at 6 o'clock that was mailed in Los Angeles, Calif., on the same day at 3 a. m. I congratulate my old friend, Mr. Jack Frye, and may I say that Howard Hughes appears to be a wealthy young man in this country who has put his money to good use and substantial scientific work and he ought to be complimented. Too many in his position do otherwise."

Rep. Carl Hinshaw of California stated: "Mr. Speaker, yesterday a giant air transport, the new Lockheed Constellation, flew from Lockheed Airport in Burbank, Calif., to Washington in 6 hours and 58 minutes, thus beating the fastest speed record made heretofore by nearly a half-hour and the fastest coast-to-coast transport record by more than three hours. I hope the members of the House will join with me as the Representative of the Twentieth District of California in taking pride in that aircraft which was designed and built in my district. It was conceived on the drafting board more than four years ago. That is notice to the House that you do not turn out a wonderful airplane in a day; however, we now have that aircraft and can produce many more just like it for the service of our country. It presents a preview of what we may expect in civil air transport after the war is over.

"This giant transport was conceived by Jack Frye and Howard Hughes, of TWA. It was designed and built by Lockheed Aircraft Corporation for TWA and Pan-American Airways, but war intervened and the contracts were taken over by the Army Air Force."

The historic aspect of this record breaking flight has received considerable favorable editorial comment, as well as being page one news in virtually every metropolitan paper in the country. Under the heading "6 Hours 58 Minutes" the editorial columns of The New York Times, April 19, described the flight as an outline of the shape of things to come in air transportation.

"***Under the pilotage of Howard Hughes and Jack Frye, president of Transcontinental & Western Air, this massive craft, able to carry 100 soldiers with full equipment, beat the former transcontinental record, set by the same Howard Hughes in a special speed plane, by a full half hour."

"***From a long-range point of view, however, it is the implication of this remarkable flight for a more closely knit world of tomorrow which is of special interest. The performance graphically illustrates the fact that we must learn to measure tomorrow's world in terms of time rather than space units, and that under this yardstick it will be a small world indeed. The Lockheed Corporation, TWA, and the Wright Aeronautical Corporation, builder of the 2200 horsepower Cyclone engines, jointly deserve praise for achieving another milestone on the roads of the sky."

Bolton Got Stiff Neck Keeping Up With Check Points

Connie Shrank Distance And a Poker Loss

(Continued from page 1, col. 1)

Lawrence J. Chiappino, Robert L. Loomis, Ed J. Minser, Orville R. Olson, Lee Spruill, and Richard de Campo, all of TWA; R. L. Thoren, Richard Stanton, and Thomas Watkins of Lockheed; Lt. Col. C. A. Shoop of the Army Air Forces, S. J. Solomon, chairman of the Airlines Committee for U. S. Air Policy, and myself.

The three Lockheed men and Chiappino, Loomis, de Campo, and Olson had participated in many of the flight tests for "Connie" during the weeks she was being groomed for the delivery flight. Today they were traveling as passengers—"going along for the ride," as one of them put it.

The high loading steps were hauled away as the last passenger enplaned. Outside, the ground crew completed last minute preparations as casually as if they were servicing a DC-3 for a routine passenger flight. Across the semi-darkened field a few score of onlookers stood in groups of two and three, their attention riveted on the activities about the plane. Word had got around that the Connie was about to leave and newspapermen were on hand to time her takeoff.

Up front, the crew took their quarters. Wheel blocks were removed, brakes were released and twenty husky mechanics pushed the plane backward into a position where the engines could be started. They spun on, one by one, churning the air with a roar that echoed dully through the cabin.

Seat belts were fastened and in a few minutes the Connie taxied out to the end of the asphalt runway, which stretched more than a mile through a corridor of dim lights. As Hughes wheeled the big ship about, I felt a tension which no one else seemed to share. The others were chatting easily as though they were waiting for a cup of coffee and a breakfast roll in a lunchwagon. Mentally, I marveled at their casualness.

The four 2200-horsepower Wright Cyclone engines were "revved" up and almost before we knew it, the ship began to roll. In a matter of seconds, we were off the ground. By the time the last boundary light passed under our wing, we were several hundred feet in the air.

"Nice takeoff," someone murmured.

The climb was smooth and steady. At 15,000 feet, the plane leveled off. Lights from towns and villages far below us dwindled, then faded away as we crossed a ridge of mountains and headed across the desert. Bunks were made up and most of the passengers sought sleep. First to find it was Chiappino, TWA's test pilot in many of the earlier trial flights of the Connie, who was finding that riding as a passenger was a novel pleasure.

"Wake me up just before we get to Washington," he grinned as he turned in.

Olson, who only three years ago was a chief clerk in TWA's Traffic Department in Kansas City, but who since has amassed more than a thousand hours in the air, scouted the galley for something to eat. He found ample breakfasts for all aboard. The coffee was cold in the thermos jugs but there was an electric heater aboard so it could be reheated. Olson designated himself steward for the flight, but no one among the few of us awake were interested in eating at the moment.

Ed Minser, TWA's chief meteorologist, who had forecast the weather for the flight, peered out of the windows at frequent intervals, looking for landmarks, or check points. With slide rule and map, he made unofficial computations of speed. Officially, that was the navigator's business but Minser wanted a record of his own.

He whistled softly under his breath as he sighted Needles, Calif., directly under our left wing. To me, it was almost incredible for it takes eleven hours by the fastest train to cover the distance the Connie had negotiated in less than an hour.

General H. H. Arnold, Commanding General of the AAF landed at the Washington National Airport in an Army transport, and inspected the Constellation. He is shown here with Howard Hughes and followed by Otis Bryan, TWA vice president of War Projects.

In a matter of minutes, Minser sighted Kingman, Ariz. We recalled that only a comparatively few years ago, transport planes had to stop at Kingman for fuel on their run from Los Angeles to Winslow, Ariz., and the East. They couldn't carry enough gas to fly the Los Angeles-Winslow leg nonstop. And here we were with a nonstop schedule some 2,300 miles long, plotted on a routine flight and with more passengers and crew members than the old "Tin Goose" could carry.

LEO BARON

Word came back from the control room over the "inter com" phone that we were still cruising at 15,000 feet. The skies were cloudless and the moon glinted sharply against the wings and fuselage. It was a beautiful night, but a weather "front" was expected ahead. At the moment, however, it was "cavu," ceiling and visibility unlimited.

The first flush of dawn crept across the skies shortly after five o'clock. At that altitude, Minser observed, we could see the dawn four or five minutes before any groundling who might happen to be about at that hour. It gave one the feeling of viewing a preview of the universe from a ringside seat.

Some of the sleepers began stirring in their bunks and then they asked about breakfast. Olson and Lockheed's Tommy Watkins set about re-heating the coffee. Cups were handed around and the talk passed from the flight to other subjects—opening of the big league baseball season the next day, the war, and similar topics.

Breakfast was enough to satisfy most any hearty appetite. It came packed in boxes—orange juice, fruit, cereal, sweet rolls, coffee and milk. Loomis relieved Frye at the co-pilot's seat while the latter came back in the cabin to eat. The flight, he reported was going according to the book.

Waiting in the crowd for the arrival of the Constellation in Washington were Beverley Dille, secretary to Jack Frye, Mrs. Frye, and Austine Cassini, Washington society columnist.

The sun was just beginning to lift over the horizon when Minser pointed below. We were passing directly over San Francisco peaks, the highest mountains in Arizona with an elevation of some 12,000 feet. From the ground, these peaks stand like majestic monuments but from where we sat in the sky, they resembled small hills mantled heavily in snow. A few minutes later—in less time than it takes to drink a second cup of coffee—we had passed north of Winslow and were veering slightly north of TWA's regular transcontinental course to pick up a great circle route.

Rudy Thoren, Lockheed's chief flight test engineer, strolled into the control room and emerged a few minutes later, chuckling.

"Bolton (the navigator) is complaining about his duties," he reported. "He says he's getting a stiff neck, turning it from right to left and back again to keep track of the check points we're passing.

"I told him," added Thoren, "that those weren't beacon lights, they're state boundaries."

Olson fished a crumpled telegram out of his pocket. He had received it just before we left, from his wife in Washington.

"This gave the Western Union people a shock," he said.

The message read:

"Triplets born today, two blonde, one brunette. Mother and babies doing nicely."

"The clerk who read it thought I was nuts because I laughed about it," said Olson. "She didn't know they were puppies."

We were crossing the continental divide when someone suggested a poker game. There were Olson, Loomis, Solomon and myself. We aroused Chiappino to make it five. Colonel Shoop joined us later. The poker game lasted until we were within 15 minutes of Washington. Let it be said for the record that Olson was the winner by some $37 by the time we called it quits, and that should buy a lot of dog bones. I dropped $18, but will forever be grateful to the Connie, because had I been on an ordinary transport, flying from Los Angeles to Washington, I would have lost $86.45 by Minser's slide rule.

Over Northern New Mexico we began to pick up weather. Skies grew thick and only occasionally did we sight the ground. As we passed over the higher mountain peaks, updrafts of air caught the Connie and bounced her a little but she rode sturdily through the turbulence with no discomfort to her passengers. It was like a battleship biting its way through heavy seas.

Among prominent visitors on the inspection tour as guests of TWA were Mrs. Woodrow Wilson, wife of the late president and her brother, Wilbur Bolling.

Off to the North, we sighted a conical mountain, unfamiliar to most of us.

"That's just south of Durango, Colorado," said Minser, who knows the United States topography like most people know their way to their favorite drugstore.

We were climbing now to get on top of the overcast. The mountains and mesas below were blotted out from view. Before long, we were riding along on the top of a solid overcast with a dull blue sky above us. We were not to see the ground again until we were crossing southern Ohio near Cincinnati. At 17,500 feet on instruments we leveled off again, which just cleared us over the cloud formations.

Light icing conditions were encountered over Kansas. We climbed still higher to get out of it and reached 18,500 feet near Chanute. Even at that level, more than three miles above sea level, we were as comfortable as though we had our feet propped up in our living room. Outside, the temperature was below zero but owing to our cabin supercharger we were comfortable in our shirt-sleeves while Olson won hand after hand. That was our only complaint.

We passed south of Kansas City, TWA's headquarters base, and reported our position over Butler, 60 miles to the south. St. Louis was quickly beneath us, but no one saw it, so thick was the overcast. Not until we were approaching Cincinnati did we break into the open and see the rolling Ohio countryside below through the scattered clouds. It was here that we reached our top speed as the plane was borne along in the arms of a favorable wind. The exact speed cannot be told but it was enough to impress the most skeptical.

According to plan, the descent should have now begun but because of thunderstorm conditions reported over the Alleghenies, it was delayed until we reached the Ohio river. Frye, who had taken over the controls somewhere in Eastern Kansas, began nosing the plane down gradually and it was at this point that I had the first sensation of speed I had ever felt in an airplane. At 7,000 feet, the ground seemed to be moving by as swiftly as it does to a train traveler staring 100 yards beyond the window.

It was at this juncture that someone in the cabin decided that there was a chance to reach Washington in less than seven hours.

"If we make it in ten minutes, we'll come in under the wire," he said.

Watches were consulted and for the first time in the entire trip, there was a noticeable feeling of tense excitement aboard the plane. Passengers began pull-

(Continued on page 14, col. 4)

Just Before the Take-off

Awaiting the departure, Ed Minser, right, above, meteorologist of TWA and weatherman for the flight, confers with an official of Lockheed. Note Minser's roll of weather maps.

A Small Group On Runway Tensely Watches Take-off

It was 3 a.m. the morning of April 17.

There on the black runway of Lockheed Air Terminal that fronts a P-38 factory, the Constellation stood while all about it men hurried back and forth. Time was getting short now and those who had come out to watch the Connie get away on her maiden flight across the continent shifted restlessly from foot to foot, hands in pockets and shoulders huddled against the chill night air.

In and out of a black hole high above the ground—the entrance to the cockpit—men came and went.

In the scattered lights of the airport, the Connie's silver skin glimmered faintly and she seemed only to be waiting the call to go, like a great, patient dog.

Suddenly someone pointed skyward. "Look, the moon!" There, like a yellow scythe set into the blackest sky hung a crescent moon, directly over the Connie's right rudder. "It's a good sign," said another watcher. It made you feel warm and more comfortable and little bursts of conversation began to replace the strained watching of the men at work.

A group of men in business suits walked up. "Hello, Chip!" "Hello, Leo!" Here were the Connie's first passengers. They chatted a moment as others came up, then began straggling to the back of the ship, where they climbed the specially-made ladder-platform that gets you some 20 feet above ground to the cabin entrance of the big ship. Scattered goodbyes, wishes of good luck trailed them into the cabin.

A tall, husky man walked up among the watchers. It was Jack Frye, wearing the same tan jacket and trousers he had all week as he and Howard Hughes put the Connie through her final pre-flight trials. He shook hands, glanced at his watch and started up the ladder to the cockpit. As he reached the top, a photographer called to him and snapped a picture. With a wave, he disappeared in the inner darkness of the plane.

The tension among the watchers increased. "Pretty soon, now!" someone said. Heads nodded in agreement.

In a moment, a station wagon drew alongside the ship and out of it climbed Howard Hughes, wearing the brown tweed coat in which he had flown the Connie in the busy days just before flight time. He nodded in recognition to men near his car, smiled at a wish of "good luck" and climbed the ladder after Frye.

Already aboard ship were the rest of the crew, Navigator Ed Bolton; C. E. Glover, radio operator, and R. L. Proctor, flight engineer. In the cabin behind were the passengers, the veteran Lawrence Chiappino, test pilot on the Connie's trials, Richard DeCampo, Bob Loomis, Orville Olson and Lee Spruill, TWA's test crew; E. J. Minser, TWA chief meteorologist, and Leo Baron, general manager of PID. Others aboard were three Lockheed observers, Richard Stanton, R. L. Thoren and Thomas Watkins; Lt. Col. C. A. Shoop of the Army Air Forces, and Sam Solomon, chairman of the 17 airlines' committee for U. S. Air Policy.

Top: In the eerie night, crew, passengers and Lockheed officials await departure time. Jack Frye and Howard Hughes, co-captains, are second and third from the left.
Below: Less than 7 hours later another crowd of spectators cheers the Constellation (circled at top of photo) as she is about to land in Washington, D. C.

G. A. Putnam, left, TWA maintenance foreman at Burbank and Lawrence J. Chiappino, pilot of TWA's test crew.

The whine of the starter motor of one engine startled the crowd. Quickly the big Wright Cyclone caught. A puff of exhaust smoke drifted across the Connie's wing and the motor settled into a steady, low roar. Soon the props of the four motors were whirring. The small crowd outside moved back. Some began drifting toward the runway on which the Connie would take off.

It seemed endless minutes as Hughes and Frye warmed the engines. The tension eased as the plane still stood there on the runway. "Anything wrong?" a voice inquired. There was nothing wrong with the steady roar of the motors. And then, as if in answer, one motor revved up for a trial, then another.

Almost before you realized it, the big ship began to move down the runway to the starting place. Skyward, the moon seemed to be watching, too.

Connie rounded the terminal and moved far down the main runway. There she paused again while Hughes and Frye gave the motors another trial power burst. The crowd, which could not have exceeded 75 persons, had moved to the main runway, eyes strained intently on what, at a distance, looked like a great beetle.

Now, as though all doubts had cleared, the big ship moved quickly to the end of the runway, swung abreast it, then brought her nose toward the distant mountains that background the long landing strip.

She seemed hardly to pause. As one, the watchers aground moved closer to the runway.

"She's off!" a voice shouted.

Yes, she was moving down the runway now, her motors pouring out a deafening roar.

She passed the intersection of the main runways and now she gathered speed. Her nose wheel seemed to be feeling the way for the great bulk that followed.

Then suddenly you saw the plane better than you had before and you realized she was off the ground. The backdrop of the mountains hid her momentarily except for her navigation lights. Then she cleared into the background of sky.

The Constellation was away! In a few minutes she was out of sight.

A Model from Photos

The day the Connie made her record flight, Dan Marra, 13-year-old brother of A. G. Marra of TWA radio-communications, KC, appeared at the CTO with his own model conception of the Connie, built from photographs and information gathered in aviation magazines and newspapers. His big brother supplied the materials needed for the model and Danny shouldered the headaches and the manual labor. A solid model, it took three months to complete.

NAA Official Aircraft Records

Here are official NAA national transcontinental and inter-city records set by aircraft prior to the flight of the Constellation.

WEST TO EAST
TRANSCONTINENTAL RECORD
Howard R. Hughes, Hughes "Special" monoplane, Pratt & Whitney "Wasp Jr.," 700 HP engine, from Burbank, Calif., to Newark, N. J. January 19, 1937. Distance, 2,445 miles; elapsed time, 7 hours, 28 minutes, 25 seconds; average speed, 327.151 m.p.h.

EAST TO WEST
TRANSCONTINENTAL RECORD
A. P. de Seversky, modified Seversky pursuit monoplane, Pratt & Whitney Twin Row Wasp engine, from Brooklyn, N. Y., to Burbank, Calif., August 29, 1938. Distance, 2,457 miles; elapsed time, 10 hours, 2 minutes, 55.7 seconds; average speed, 244.507 m.p.h.

WEST TO EAST
TRANSCONTINENTAL RECORD
FOR COMMERCIAL TRANSPORT AIRPLANES
D. W. Tomlinson, pilot; H. B. Snead, co-pilot; Douglas DC-1 monoplane, 2 Wright "Cyclone" 710 HP engines, from Burbank, Calif., to Brooklyn, N. Y., April 30, 1935. Distance, 2,457 miles; elapsed time, 11 hours, 5 minutes, 45 seconds; average speed, 221.434 m.p.h.

LOS ANGELES TO WASHINGTON, D. C. (TRANSPORT AIRPLANE)
Leland S. Andrews, Vultee V-1-A Monoplane, Wright "Cyclone" 735 HP engine, February 20-21, 1935. Elapsed time, 10 hours, 22 minutes, 54 seconds; average speed, 221.641 m.p.h.

CHICAGO, ILL., TO WASHINGTON, D. C., (TRANSPORT AIRPLANE)
Jack Frye, Northrop Gamma 2-D monoplane, NR-13758, Wright "Cyclone" 710 HP engine, from Chicago Municipal Airport, Chicago, Ill., to Washington Airport, South Washington, Virginia, February 18, 1936; elapsed time, 2 hours, 22 minutes.

MARCH FIELD, CALIF., TO MITCHELL FIELD, N. Y.
Lt. Ben S. Kelsey, U. S. Army Air Corps, Lockheed XP-38 airplane, two Allison liquid cooled 1,000 HP engines, February 11, 1936; elapsed time, 7 hours, 45 minutes, 36 seconds.

The unofficial record of the Stratoliner, West to East:
July 8-9, 1940, Burbank—New York LaGuardia Field) TWA Boeing 307-B "Stratoliner," 12:22 (11:55 flying time), 15 passengers, crew of 6.

We, At Home - - - Eyes Watched the Skies . . . Minds Lived the Flight

BY ELDON FRYE, TWA KANSAS CITY

Dawn was only a pale grey ghost on the rainy airport at Kansas City when the teletype in the TWA dispatch office tapped out the news that the Constellation had lifted her graceful bulk from the soil of California at 5:56, KC time, and was headed east to the thunder of her 8,800 horsepower. Around the room busy fingers lifted from typewriter keys, and a kind of cheerful thrill ran like a wave through the Operations offices and hangars as the word was passed—"The Connie's on her way!"

Out on the flight ramp a motor coughed and roared, was joined by another, and a faithful old DC-3 moved off into the darkness for a routine take-off to New York, her warning lights winking steadily. Maybe she knew that this was an eventful morning, and that before she set her wheels down on the field at La Guardia airport, the Constellation would have passed her, going twice as fast, to set a new record for the Los Angeles-Washington run. But she must have been a little proud, too, for the big youngster would probably not be able to surpass the war-record of the DC-3, and she could retire gracefully, covered with glory.

Fritz Jenkins, Night Dispatcher, went on with his routine duties, as did the rest of the Dispatch crew, but in their mind's eye they could see the great ship as she lifted over the hump of the Sierras to settle down for the long run across the continent. Not a one of them but wished with all his heart that he could have made the flight with big Jack Frye, president of the airline, and Howard Hughes, famed aviation enthusiast and majority TWA stockholder. These men had conceived the Constellation and were now seeing their dreams materialize. Lockheed had built well—the Connie handled as sweetly as a pursuit ship.

The night slowly became day. Routine flights arrived and departed. A slow rain drizzled down on the KC airport and the weather threatened to "close in" but never quite made it. Anxious ears listened to the loudspeaker and tried to sort out of the regular run of technical talk from ships to ground some word of the Connie. Finally it came "Over Kingman, Arizona at 15,000." Eyes went to the clock and low whistles were heard. "Man, that's travelin'." Meteorologists strolled in for a word of news. TWA Captains and First Officers listened appreciatively and nodded their experienced heads. "Yeah, man, that's FLYIN'!"

The night shift drifted out and was replaced by the day shift, but J. T. Tomlinson, who had been working all night, couldn't pull himself away. He plotted distances on the maps, calculated the ground speed of the Connie, and tried to figure when it would reach Kansas City. He was tired and sleepy and he should have gone home to bed, but the Connie was flying. . . .

Marguerite Grandsen put on her headset and started giving weather and flight information to C. L. Glover, the Connie's radio operator. For hours she talked almost constantly—concisely, unemotionally, and accurately relaying information. Glover answered laconically, his mind on the thousands of details that go with the flying of a big ship. "Estimate south of Wichita at 9:20. Estimate Kansas City at 10:15, Central War Time."

In the Dispatch room, eyes automatically went to the lowering grey sky outside the big windows. George Rice, Chief Pilot, his lean, lined face full of appreciation of a great flight, said, "And to think that we've been building up to an average speed of 150 miles for years and years. Why the old Fokkers used to do about 120—and now look, the speed of the DC-3 is doubled overnight!"

A pilot grinned and remarked, "Maybe we could get up there in a Cub and wave handkerchiefs and throw confetti at 'em as they pass—only we'd probably be blown half way back to California by the propwash!"

Speculation ran through the little clot of listeners around the loudspeaker. Why, sleeper planes would become almost obsolete—why have them when you could cross the continent that quickly? Look, you could leave KC at six in the morning, go to LA, conduct your business affairs for a couple of hours, and be back in KC in time for dinner! Think what that would mean on the Honolulu run— on the New York-London route! Why, you wouldn't have to carry but a single meal for everybody! But, man, think what it's going to be like around this Dispatch Office when we get forty of those babies shuttling back and forth across the country after the war! Whew!

The hands of the clock crept to ten, then slowed down, it seemed. "Will pass approximately 50 miles south of KC," said Glover's voice. Eyes went to the maps. Over Butler, Mo. In the Public Information Department uptown, Hal Grayson, haggard and red-eyed from an all night stint of phoning and telegraphing instructions and information to bureaus from coast-to-coast, called "Sox" Bowersock of the Kansas City Star and gave him the estimate on the time at KC. "I got a deadline at 10:20, so let me know if that estimate holds!" Sox was champing at the bit.

At the Airport, Don Eldridge radioed Glover, "FLS REQ TO KNOW IF YOUR KC EST OF 1015 IS STILL GOOD AND WILL HAVE REVISED WEA IN A FEW MINS."

Translated, that means, "Is your estimate of 10:15 still good for KC? We will have revised weather information in a few minutes."

Back came Glover's answer: "Yes, our estimate of 10:15 is still good—will stand by for weather."

Over the top of the weather the Connie soared past Kansas City and began the 950-mile leg to Washington. Pencils busily computed speed and time. Man, that's FLYIN'.

Pat Gallup, a pilot himself, was in and out of dispatch, his face serious, his mind with the men in the cockpit of the big ship. Don Eldridge went from the "weather" room to the radio room and back to dispatch. Don Kunz, daytime Dispatcher, grinned and shook his head. "Boy, I wish I was on that baby!"

"Flight forty-five delayed on account of weather. How much gas load you have for twenty-one? Got a crew for nine, yet? Say, Goldy, telephone on 13 for you!"

The busy hum of the dispatch office went on in routine fashion, but the news of the Connie flowed into and out of the office and became a solid feeling of pride as it grew apparent that TWA and the Connie made a record-breaking team.

"Over Cincinnati at twelve, noon, estimate."

"Over Cincinnati now, at eleven-forty-eight, Central War Time."

And then it was over—she was in—the big Connie had settled into the Washington National Airport at 12:54, KC time, with a new record. There were no loud cheers in Dispatch—the work went on just the same—and out on the runways the big silver DC-3's with the red stripes on their tails continued to arrive and depart—but you had the feeling that everybody around Dispatch was a little glad and proud to be in the airline business—with TWA and Jack Frye and Howard Hughes.

The Curtain Raiser At Las Vegas

Immediately after the delivery flight at Las Vegas: Left to right, President Frye, John A. Collings, vice president of Operations; Commander Paul E. Richter, former executive vice president, now on military leave; Capt. J. S. Bartles, supt. of the Western Division and Lew Goss, executive assistant-operating facilities.

TWA formally acquired possession of the Constellation, bearing the airline's insignia, on a bright Sunday afternoon at Las Vegas, Nev., April 16.

There, on a wind-swept airport, the Constellation was delivered to a TWA crew, headed by Howard Hughes and Jack Frye, by the builders of the great ship—Lockheed Aircraft Corp.

The delivery flight was the curtain-raiser to another even more epochal event—the flight of the giant ship some 12 hours later from Burbank to Washington in less than seven hours. There at the nation's Capital, TWA delivered the giant ship to the Army Air Transport Command.

The swift rush of events contrasted sharply with the waiting that preceded the plane's delivery. Delays are nothing unusual in the building of a new airplane, but Connie had also the delays of war. Of course, nothing could stand in the way of Lockheed's first job—the production of the famous P-38 fighter planes.

The first Constellation was flown in January, 1943. It was to be more than a year before the second huge transport was to pass her final tests and win acceptance.

Shortly before noon on a Sunday, April 16, the Connie took off from Lockheed air terminal for Las Vegas with 28 persons aboard. Piloting the craft was Lt. Col. C. A. Shoop, of the Army Air Forces, with a crew made up of Hughes and Joe Towle, Thomas Watkins and R. L. Thoren, all three of Lockheed.

Also aboard were Ed Bolton, of TWA, who replaced Thoren on the return flight to Burbank, and the following of TWA: President Frye; Lawrence Chiappino, test pilot of the Connie for TWA; C. L. Glover, radio operator; Joe Bartles, western operations superintendent; John Lockhart, treasurer; R. L. Proctor, flight engineer; Joe Putman, western maintenance superintendent; Kenneth Rearwin, of Kansas City; Capt. Jack Walsh, western chief pilot; Commander Paul Richter, U. S. N., TWA's former executive vice-president on leave to the Navy; and Johnny Randazzo, TWA photographer.

Col. C. A. Shoop of the AAF meets John Lockhart, TWA treasurer. Kenneth Rearwin, assistant treasurer, center background.

The Army Air Forces were represented, besides Lt. Col. Shoop, by Major S. F. Robertson, Maj. E. J. Kelley and Capt. William S. Cummings.

Lockheed personnel aboard included L. W. Wulfekuhler, J. W. Shigley, Richard Stanton, Wesley G. Lafever, C. F. Schmidt, Henry Lay, Eric Miller, and Paul Wegefahrt.

Lt. Col. Shoop took the Constellation off, circling the terminal for altitude and then starting eastward toward Las Vegas. The flight took one hour, twenty minutes.

At Las Vegas, the Constellation's crew and passengers were greeted by representatives of the first annual Aviada, which was being staged there to commemorate the first commercial airmail flight, made on April 17, 1926. Then, after lunch, the ship was flown back to Burbank and made ready for her trip east.

Describe Flight On Initial Constellation

Two Kansas City members of TWA's treasury staff last July were passengers aboard the first Constellation completed by the Lockheed Aircraft Corp., on a flight from Burbank, Calif., to Las Vegas, Nev. At the latter city, Lockheed delivered the giant camouflaged space-eater to TWA and the airline immediately transferred it to the Army Air Forces for wartime duty.

The passengers were Kenneth R. Rearwin, assistant to the treasurer, and Jay M. Jackson of the airline's contract section.

"It was a thrilling experience to be one of the first passengers on the largest, fastest and most powerful land-based transport, which will do a wonderful job in today's military emergency," said Rearwin.

"The craft's performance was phenomenal and it was a surprisingly smooth ride. The plane's short take-off and landing runs were hard to believe."

Jackson voiced just as much enthusiasm. He was particularly impressed by the steadier ride and lack of vibration as compared to today's transports.

"After riding in DC-3's, it seemed as if we were in another world," Jackson added. "After an exceedingly short run, the ship climbed much more rapidly than any transport I have been aboard before. We felt as if we were riding in a pursuit ship instead of a transport."

"Although these super-transports will be turned over to the Army by TWA for wartime duty, with the return of peace, their possibilities as luxury airliners will be realized. I'm proud to have been aboard the first Constellation received by TWA, although it was our property for only a short time. I'd like to place my reservation now for the first trip across the Atlantic when the war is over."

Specifications and Blueprints Grew as Connie Progressed

An airline doesn't buy a new plane like an individual buys the season's latest car model.

It's not that easy. Five or six years, as in the case of the Constellation, may roll by before the airline gets exactly what it wants.

It begins with a basic concept of a plane presented by the airline to the manufacturer. It takes that form of procedure because the airline leaders are closer to the concept of performance and economic needs of an airplane for airline operation, than the man who builds them.

That original concept progresses into a general configuration based on such items as power, wing area, speed, endurance and even passenger comfort.

An airline executive in most cases goes to the manufacturer with: "I've dreamed up an airplane and it looks like this. I want it to do this, this and so on." The dream sometimes starts when airline executives sit at dinner, and begins to take material form as a rough sketch on a paper napkin, the back of an envelope or a business card.

In the case of the Constellation, Howard Hughes, Jack Frye and Paul Richter, engineers, D. W. Tomlinson, Jack Franklin, Ralph Ellinger and Jerry Brophy of the legal department, spent many hours together, laid out their specifications and then discussed them with manufacturers and their engineers. One collection of specifications forms a 200-page book. Blueprints grew faster than the fictional bean stalk, correspondence between D. W. Tomlinson, vice president of engineering, now on leave as a Captain in the Navy and his successor, Jack Franklin, with the Lockheed engineers fills two cabinet drawers in the home office in Kansas City.

A man in every branch of TWA's engineering department contributed to the specifications. The power plant man worked, the heat exchange expert added his ideas, the electrical man his. There were 87 specifications of a major nature dealing with maintenance and serviceability. There's a sheaf of blue prints and specifications on wing-flap control rods. The engineering pilot applies this potential airplane to TWA's flight operations and makes his suggestions.

Every week as the blue prints and the mock-ups take form there's a meeting of minds, bring up a series of new points to the manufacturer. Studies were conducted continually in TWA on economic and performance factors.

Engineers consulted with the boys in the hangars and the shops on problems of accessibility and maintenance and produced an engine installation innovation which is believed to be the best of its kind. As a result the Connie has another record, which doesn't make national headlines, but is vital to the boys in the hangar . . . she can take a complete engine change in 28 minutes.

Even now that the Constellation has been born and startled the world with the log of her maiden transcontinental flight, planning and specifications continue, both from Jack Franklin's desk in TWA's engineering department and at Lockheed. In the manufacturing plant today 300 or more people, continue to work on the design of the Constellation.

"That is not unusual," Jack Franklin states. "Do you know that we're still making changes on the DC-3? That is just a single example as to how the airline keeps its planes under constant studies for perfection."

When the contract was given to Lockheed, John Guy went out to Burbank as TWA's resident engineer at the Lockheed plant. Six months later he transferred to TWA's Intercontinental Division at Washington and his assignment was taken over by Lee Spruill who has remained on the West Coast for two years. Their job and that of the entire TWA engineering department was to watch the construction of the ship, from the time it began to grow from a bunch of sheet metal on a bench, visualizing it from an airline standpoint and anticipating problems before they were built into the plane, or iron out those already there.

Seven Men Form the Test Crew

Captain Lawrence J. Chiappino, veteran TWA pilot shown in center holding a flight plan, heads the TWA test crew who have been checked out to operate the giant Lockheed Constellation. All have had overseas flying experience as members of TWA's Intercontinental Division. Left to right stooping are Charles L. Glover, radio officer; Orville R. Olson, second officer; Chiappino; Robert Loomis, first officer; Edward T. Bolton, navigator. Standing, Richard de Campo, left, flight engineer and right, R. L. Proctor, flight engineer.

A test crew of seven, all seasoned in overseas operations through experience gained as members of TWA's Intercontinental Division, are qualified to take the giant Lockheed Constellation to any port in the world.

The crew spent months at the Lockheed Aircraft Corp. plant at Burbank, Calif., studying every unit of the revolutionary craft while the ship was in production. Upon its completion, the group spent weeks flying the huge ship on the West Coast.

Lawrence J. Chiappino, Los Angeles, veteran TWA pilot with more than two and a quarter million miles of flying to his credit, heads the crew. Other members are: Capt. Robert L. Loomis, Los Angeles, first officer; Orville R. Olson, Kansas City, second officer; Edward T. Bolton, New York, chief navigator; Richard de Campo, New York, chief flight engineer; R. L. Proctor, Carthage, Mo., flight engineer; and Charles L. Glover, Dallas, Texas, radio officer.

The Intercontinental Division was organized shortly after the outbreak of the war, its personnel flying transport planes to the far corners of the globe for the Army's Air Transport Command. Most of the Constellation's crew members have been with this division of Transcontinental & Western Air, Inc., since its inception.

Captain Chiappino has been a pilot on regular schedules for TWA since 1930 and has flown 230,000 miles for the ICD, a large part of it over water. Born May 26, 1904, at New Almaden, Calif., Chiappino was graduated from the University of California in 1927.

He went directly to Army Flying School at Brooks and Kelly Fields, San Antonio, Texas. Chiappino returned to California in 1928 and became a flying instructor at the Palo Alto School of Aviation and later was a pilot for Western Air Express.

The veteran flyer never has so much as scratched the wing of a plane in his long career as a transport pilot.

Captain Loomis, the first officer of the Constellation crew, was graduated from the University of California in 1935 and went into the Navy immediately as an aviation cadet. After his graduation as an ensign, Loomis joined the Standard Oil Company of California as research engineer and was employed by TWA as an engineering pilot in 1940. He is qualified to operate all Intercontinental Division equipment in the capacity of captain.

Chief Navigator Bolton was born in London, England, and made his first sea voyage at the age of 13. After being at sea continuously for almost eight years, Bolton came ashore and took up the study of aerial navigation and commercial aeronautics in the United States. He made eight trips around the world, most of them in the capacity of deck and navigation officer on merchant vessels. Bolton joined TWA in February, 1942, as navigator with the overseas division and was made assistant chief navigator in September of the same year.

Second Officer Olson joined TWA as a junior clerk at Kansas City in 1937 and advanced to assistant chief clerk. He was granted a leave of absence in 1941 to complete his flight training under the CPT program, returning to TWA as second officer with the Intercontinental Division in 1942.

Chief Flight Engineer de Campo joined TWA in 1935 as a mechanic at Newark, N. J. He became a flight engineer on TWA's fleet of Stratoliners soon after their purchase and served in that capacity until the overseas division of the airline was organized.

Flight Engineer Proctor joined TWA in 1935 as a mechanic and also became a flight engineer aboard the Stratoliners during their commercial operation, transferring to the overseas division upon its inception.

Radio Officer Glover joined the TWA overseas operation in June of 1942. He has flown 250,000 miles aboard the Stratoliners during their operation for the Air Transport Command.

New System for Fuel Saving Utilizes Wind

Capt. John A. Hass, former TWA meteorologist, has worked out a new system of saving gas by travel with the wind, according to a news feature in the Boston Post. Through scientific utilization of available tailwinds and other atmospheric auxiliaries it is possible, in the China-Burma-India theater, for medium bombers to fly 11 missions on the fuel formerly consumed in 10; sometimes the proportion is one gas-free trip out of five or six. The most advantageous height to fly at any given time is one of the principles involved in the new fuel-saving idea.

Building a Plane Involves Treasury and Legal Staffs

The record-breaking flight of the Lockheed Constellation was an engineering triumph, the culmination of more than five years of planning and development. Many engineering problems had to be ironed out. Miles of wiring and scores of blueprints were involved, to say nothing of the outstanding engineering feats.

But there was another important task, too. That was the handling of complicated contractual and legal problems, which required men trained in law and finance instead of flying and mechanics.

Virtually every step which was taken in planning the development and construction of the plane itself was accompanied by knotty problems of this nature. TWA's interests had to be coordinated with those of the Hughes Tool Company, Lockheed Aircraft Corp., and, most urgently of all, several different commands of the United States Army Air Forces.

Like the flight itself, this task was handled with skill and foresight.

Because of the many interests involved, this required complicated clearances from coast to coast—Los Angeles, Kansas City, Wright Field, and Washington — with every department in the company exerting its best efforts at all times.

On the executive side, President Frye, Paul E. Richter (now a commander in the United States Navy) and Executive Vice President E. Lee Talman personally passed on every significant phase in line with policies of the Board of Directors and gave even details a great deal of their personal attention.

Policy decisions then were put into effect and administered by such members of TWA's staff as John Lockhart, secretary and treasurer and George Spater of the airline's general counsel. Treasurer Lockhart, in turn, had the able assistance of such staff members as Milton McQueen, assistant treasurer; Kenneth Rearwin, assistant treasurer; Jay Jackson, staff assistant, contractual division. Harry West of TWA counsel and Norman Bowersox of Chadbourne, Wallace, Park and Whiteside, worked in close cooperation with Attorney Spater on many legal points.

Charles Gress, assisted by Walter Everley and the latter's staff, also had many major and unusual insurance arrangements to handle, frequently on short notice.

Vice President Clarence Fleming and his staff handled the execution of papers incidental to redelivery of the plane to the government at Washington.

The Treasurer's staff prepared the numerous papers which were required in effecting delivery of the planes. When the first Constellation was delivered in July of 1943, Rearwin and Jackson were delegated to handle the paper work. The arrangements which they made concerning its delivery laid the groundwork for the procedure to be followed in subsequent deliveries.

When the second Constellation was ready, Lockhart and Rearwin went to the West coast to handle the contractual part of the delivery to TWA. McQueen stood by at Dayton to work out any last-minute change with the contracting officer at Wright Field while West, Jackson and Gress were on hand in Kansas City to take care of legal and insurance details.

As in the case of the first plane, the second Constellation was flown from Burbank to Las Vegas where delivery by Lockheed took place. Lockhart and Rearwin handled the numerous papers needed in connection with the transaction. President Frye and Howard Hughes took the controls on the return from Las Vegas to Burbank. During this trip they climbed to 20,000 feet. However, with the pressurized cabin, the passengers were perfectly comfortable.

TRAFFIC TRAINING

L. P. Marechal, head of the Traffic Training Division and supervisors R. B. Riordan, John Bailey and Howard Goodrich.

Bill Koehler, chief clerk, who handles film showings and supplies for schools and organizations.

Top: Ed Tharp, traffic manual assistant, writes instructions for the training course; secretary Velma McMichael. Lower: Dorothy Prock, stenographer and Mary Louise McGee, clerk at one of the classroom enlargements of a flight schedule.

Within the past 18 months more than 350 employees in the traffic department literally have gone back to school. Their classrooms have been the various offices of traffic and their teachers, the supervisors in their home region. The school is the Traffic Training Division instituted primarily to train newcomers to their jobs in the airline. Checks have shown that the training has saved the company nine months in time in developing new personnel in airline methods and the proper handling of the air traveling public. Under this same plan older employees in the company are given a period of personalized training through a system of questionnaires which are graded and then discussed with the individual by the training supervisor.

The Division, inaugurated by Clyde Fullerton and a staff of assistants, is now headed by L. P. Marechal, who succeeded Fullerton when the latter was appointed sales manager.

The training supervisors, selected from among the more experienced district traffic managers are John Bailey of CG, Howard Goodrich of ID and R. B. Riordan of WD. They cover the entire system and each is rotated to a different region every three months. Since April, 1943, every ticket, reservations and control representative hired by the company has received the training as well as a large number of older employees who have taken it as a refresher course.

In addition the Division is responsible for the distribution of traffic training movies as well as the compilation of special handbooks for district traffic managers, to aid them in their performance of the training activity. General office departmental familiarization courses are conducted for district managers, passenger agents and cargo representatives.

John Collings - - -

(This is one of a series of biographical sketches on TWA's directors.)

Passengers aboard Flight 4 early Friday morning, April 7, 1944, were probably unaware that the tall, slim uniformed captain who flew the Skyclub from Kansas City to Columbus was a TWA vice president and director.

It is not unusual for John A. Collings, whose work and principal hobby is flying, to pilot one of the regular schedules when his duties as vice president of operations require his presence in some city on the line. "I like to fly and I like to keep my hand in," he states.

Flying has been uppermost in John Collings' thoughts and activities since boyhood, and like the background of many of TWA's executive officers, his is filled with interesting and varied experiences in the air.

Born in Washington County, Va., April 6, 1900, at the dawn of a century in which aviation was destined for its spectacular rise to a new era in transportation, he was typical of the visionary youths of his day. After finishing high school in Washington County, he turned all his efforts and studies towards a future in flying, and in 1922 joined the infant army air corps for primary flight training at Brooks Field, Texas. From Brooks, the young cadet moved to Kelly Field for advanced training, and was graduated from there in 1923, a second Lt., U. S. Army Air Corps.

In August of the following year, he was called to active duty with the 2nd Bombardment Group, then stationed at Langley Field, Va.

During this year of active duty, he participated in the first night cross country formation flight ever made by the AAF.

Another "first" was chalked up by Lt. Collings during that year when he won the first U. S. Air Corps competition bombing contest, held at Langley Field. Contestants represented every bombing squadron in the United States, Hawaii, Philippine Islands and Panama Canal Zone. Piloting a Liberty powered Martin bomber, with Lt. H. J. Brady as bombardier, he won the competition with a score of 1560 out of a possible 1600 points.

Was the Fourth Man To Join An Airline

Collings turned to commercial aviation upon completion of active duty with the army, and joined the aircraft division of the Ford Motor Company. He flew the Ford airways carrying parts to company branches in Chicago, Cleveland and Buffalo until August, 1927, when he was on leave to pilot a Ford Tri-motor on an advertising tour for the Royal Typewriter Company.

John Collings
Still pilots scheduled runs.

Recalling some of the details of that tour, Collings said he not only acted as pilot, but also was contact and publicity man.

Part of the exhibition included the dropping by parachute a packing box containing three portable typewriters, each wrapped in 2-inch wood strips which absorbed the ground shock.

"All told, we covered 187 different towns and cities from Bangor, Maine to Havana, Cuba in the East, and from Fargo, North Dakota to San Antonio, Texas in the West," Collings related. "We were the first to bring a Ford tri-motor to Havana, and they made a big show with all the newspapers devoting their front pages to it."

With the trip completed in February, 1928, Collings returned to Ford, and became their chief test pilot, testing the first wasp-powered Tri-motor Ford ever built.

During this time, Collings' reputation as a pilot was spreading among aviation circles, and on November 14, 1928, he joined Transcontinental Air Transport, a predecessor company of TWA, as chief pilot. He aided in laying out the original routes.

"When I reported in at TAT headquarters in Washington, there were only three employees there — I made the fourth," Collings remarked. In addition to his route survey work, he hired all the original TAT pilots and mechanics.

For the succeeding ten years, May, 1929, to June, 1939, he was superintendent of the Eastern Division for TAT, known as TWA since 1930.

His headquarters were in Columbus, Ohio, except for a brief period in Los Angeles, until 1937, when the Eastern Division offices moved to Chicago.

Fourteen years ago, on the TWA inaugural flight on October 25, 1930, when transcontinental service changed from a combination of air-rail to all air-service, it was the experienced young division superintendent that climbed into the control cockpit of the mail and passenger laden Ford tri-motor and piloted it on the eastbound leg between Columbus and Newark.

Prior to this inaugural flight, Collings had spent several months surveying the route between Columbus and Newark, installing weather reporting stations and assisting the Department of Commerce officials in selecting sites for the necessary lights.

Before TWA could inaugurate its service with DC-2 airplanes in 1934, a nucleus of trained pilots had to be instructed and checked out in that equipment. For sixteen days, Collings spent most of his time in the cockpit of a DC-2, checking out pilots on round trips between Chicago and New York. Upon his return to Chicago each night, he spent another two or three hours giving the pilots further instructions.

Collings left Chicago and moved to Kansas City when he became the system superintendent of operations in June, 1939. He was elected vice president of operations on May 13, 1942, succeeding Col. L. G. (Larry) Fritz who is now on leave with the Air Transport Command, and became a member of TWA's board of directors in January of last year.

In his 16 years with TWA and predecessor TAT, the executive has built up a reputation as a "square shooter," and indefatigable worker, and today, more than ever, he looks ahead with keen interest to the great future of the Air Age with which he has grown.

Surprised Man Aboard

(Continued from page 3, col. 4)

ing for the crew, exhorting them mentally to greater speed. No one knew if the men up front were aware of the precious minutes that were slipping by. No one went up front to ask.

Chiappino, who had flown this course many times, was as excited as the rest of us.

"Can you see the river?" he kept asking across the aisle. He was talking about the Potomac, which winds about one end of the Washington National Airport. When it was finally sighted, there was a shout of triumph from the passengers. The plane quickly passed over one section of Washington, circled Alexandria, Va., and after a wheeling turn, dropped down on the airport, six hours and 58 minutes after leaving Burbank.

Most surprised of all at the elapsed time was Hughes himself when he emerged from the cockpit a few moments later.

"I forgot to wind my watch," he said.