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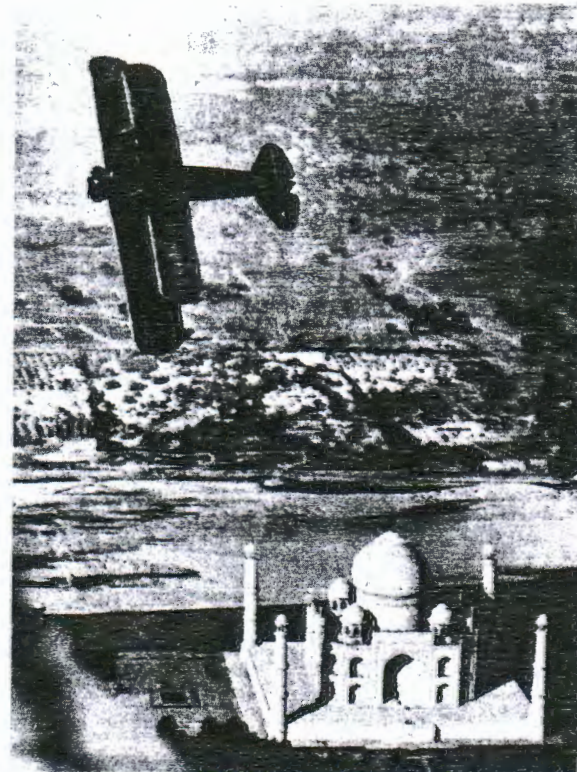
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On The Cover: The French Matra Moynet Jupiter.
Color photograph by Howard Levy

After 'The Flying Carpet'

Moye Stephens, who piloted famed writer-adventurer Richard Halliburton around the world in 1930, still is an active flyer for fun and profit



An early stop on the Halliburton-Stephens world-circling trip of 1930 was at India's Taj Mahal. Stephens put "The Flying Carpet" through a slow roll that was caught by the camera of another pilot

(From "The Flying Carpet," by Richard Halliburton, copyright 1932 by Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1960 by First National Bank of Memphis. Reprinted by permission of the publishers)

If there's a little grey in your hair, this story will mean more to you than it will to the youngsters. You'll remember back to the middle 1920's and early '30's, when the world's most popular adventure and travel writer was Richard Halliburton. His "Royal Road To Romance" sold nearly 800,000 copies in the days before the "paperback," and was on the best seller list for three years in a row. In all, he wrote six books, including the popular "Flying Carpet," the story of a vagabond journey around the world by air.

As the "middle generation" will remember, adventurer Halliburton was lost at sea with a crew of 13 while attempting to sail a Chinese junk from Hong Kong to the San Francisco World's Fair in 1939. The final radio message from Captain John Welch of the junk "Sea Dragon" to the liner, "President Coolidge," said, "Southerly gales rain squalls lee rail under water wet bunk hard tack bully beef having wonderful time wish you were here instead of me."

But what of the pilot who spent nearly two years in the back cockpit of a C3B Stearman named "The Flying Carpet" that took writer Halliburton around the world in 1930? Halliburton's pilot, Moye Stephens (AOPA 139230), is now a distinguished 58 and still very active in aviation. His wife, Inez, soloed a Stearman in 1928—after an hour and a half of dual instruction—and the couple now fly a Beechcraft Model H Bonanza for both business and pleasure.

Stephens is owner of the Specifax Company of Pasadena, Calif., manufacturer's representative for precision measuring equipment including electronic comparators. Specifax Company customers are located throughout the states of California and Arizona. In addition to sales calls and a frequent rush delivery to some isolated customer, the Stephens' fly east once or twice each year to visit equipment manufacturers.

Recently one of his eastern manufacturers, F. L. Pierce of the Pierce-West Company, visited Stephens in Pasadena and also wanted to see clients in both Sunnyvale and China Lake, locations virtually impossible to reach by airline in a single day. Stephens made a quick tour with his visitor in the Bonanza and had him back in Los Angeles in plenty of time to catch his jet to New York.

"We do these things all the time and it's so routine that we take it for granted," he explained.

It has been 32 years—and 2,300 flying hours—since "The Flying Carpet." Had Stephens remained with the airlines, he would carry the top seniority on TWA today. After graduating in law from Stanford in 1928, he flew two years for TWA and its predecessors on runs from Glendale to Agua Caliente, Mexico, and over the Rockies to Winslow, Ariz., in Ford 5AT Tri-Motors.

Stephens' background is a virtual history of West Coast aviation. As a youngster, he saw the Dominguez Air Meet in 1910. While attending Hollywood High School in 1923, he learned to fly from Eddie Bellande, now chairman of the board of the Garrett Corporation. Stephens would work 15 hours after school and on weekends, washing Jennies and Standards at the old Rogers Airport (then at the corner of Wilshire and Fairfax boulevards in Los Angeles) in exchange for 15 minutes of dual instruction in an OX-5 Standard.

In those days, long before the CAA and the FAA, Stephens began instructing after amassing a total of 15 hours. Soon he purchased a surplus Thomas-Morse Scout with "almost zero time" for \$400 and later flew this plane in "Corporal Kate" and other films. Hollywood pay in those days was \$25 per flying hour for the pilot and another \$25 for the plane. The T-M Scout was painted to depict a British Camel.

Later Stephens purchased a new

Speed-Wing Travelair and had a rebuilt 220 h.p. Wright J-5 engine installed at the factory. This plane, painted with watercolors, was used both in air scenes and to dub the sound track used in "Hell's Angels."

"There was no such thing as a 'red line' in those days," grinned Stephens. "I would come in at full bore and make a low pass over the field for sound effects. You'll remember that 'Hell's Angels' came out just after sound was introduced to the films. It had originally been written as a silent picture and the sound was dubbed in later when Jean Harlow was put in as the star."

During this time, Stephens was flying regularly with Maddux, TAT, TAT-Maddux and TWA Airlines. He recalls that checkout procedures were rather casual in those early days. Chief pilot Howard "Pop" Fey asked him if he had ever flown the single-seat cockpit Lockheed Vega.

"Yes," replied Halliburton's future pilot. "I flew one for California financier Allen Hancock after I taught him to fly."

Pop Fey then nodded toward a Vega parked on the ramp. "Go out and shoot three landings while I watch you," he directed.

"After three landings, I taxied back to the ramp and they loaded in a full quota of six paying passengers for me to take to Palm Springs," grinned Stephens. "When it came to checking out in the Ford Tri-Motor, the procedure was almost as simple. I went on

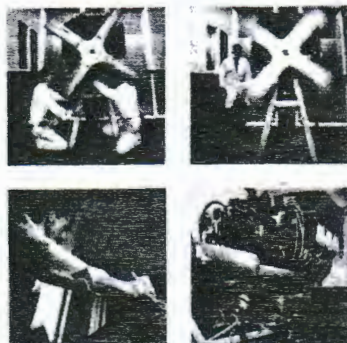


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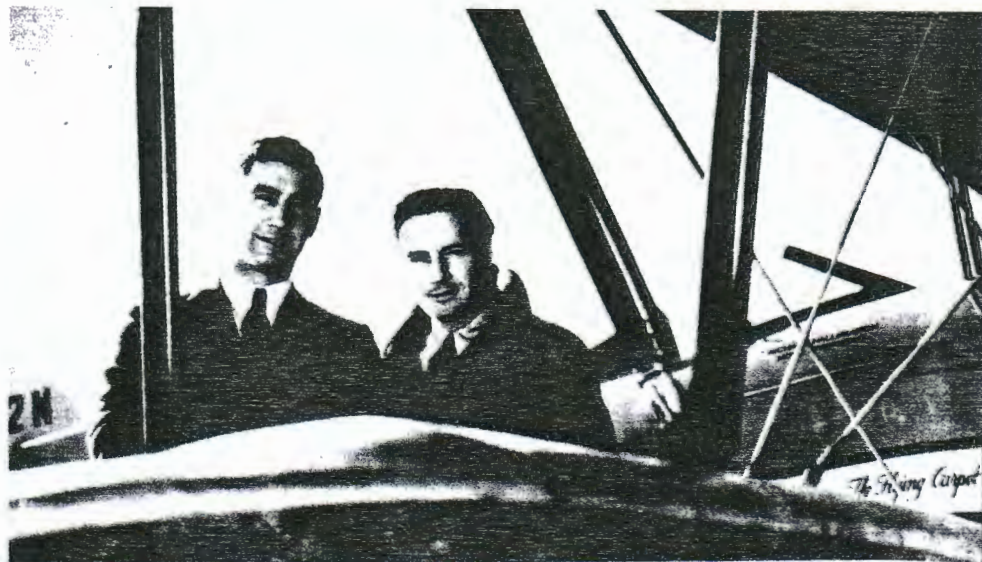
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Moye Stephens (AOPA 139230) left, and writer-adventurer Richard Halliburton pose beside the Stearman C3B in which they left the United States on a round-the-world flight in 1930

Photo by Harrell, MGM Studios

"The Flying Carpet" in the heart of Borneo, where it excited the curiosity of Dyak headhunters who had never before heard of an airplane
(From "The Flying Carpet," by Richard Halliburton, copyright 1932 by Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1980 by First National Bank of Memphis. Reprinted by permission of the publishers)



Moye Stephens and his wife, Inez, prepare for a business flight in their Beechcraft Bonanza. A manufacturer's representative for precision measuring equipment, Stephens logs some 150 hours a year in his aircraft



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one trip to San Francisco and another to San Diego, mainly to learn the route. Then Pop had me shoot three landings and the next day I was on the run to Agua Caliente with a mechanic flying as "mate" in the copilot's seat, standard procedure on Maddux.

"It makes me shudder a bit as I look back on it now," said Stephens. "If I'd had anything serious go wrong in the first 50 hours with the 'Tin Goose,' I'd have been in serious trouble.

"There were some wild and wonderful flights in the old Fords over the Rockies," reminisced Stephens. "One day I was coming back from Winslow to Kingman and there was a solid line of thunderstorms ahead. However, I could see a light spot under the clouds and dropped right down on the deck to make it. The Ford started going up and I chopped the power on all three engines. The rate of climb pegged and I was sucked up into the clouds. The only instruments I had to work with were the bank and turn, compass and air speed, but I figured that if I held my heading, I'd break out into that spot of sunlight shortly. I did, some three minutes later, at 18,000 feet! Later, when I told the other pilots about this updraft, they all grinned and figured that I was a liar. Two weeks later the same thing happened to Eddie Bellande and everyone began to respect the power in the cumulus.

"Even now, when I fly that area in my Bonanza, I keep one hand on the throttle to slow down when it begins to get 'lumpy.'"

Stephens remembers that there was a box lunch aboard for everyone on the Ford Tri-Motors except the pilot, since he flew only from Los Angeles to Winslow. The passengers went on through with the plane and the copilot continued as far as Clovis, N.M., be-

fore returning. A number of pilots, including Stephens, were accused of deliberately making it a rough trip so that at least one of the passengers wouldn't want his lunch.

"After all, at the age of 22 or 23, a fellow had quite an appetite," grinned Stephens.

On one flight into Glendale, Stephens' copilot became ill and went back into the aft section of the fuselage behind the bulkhead to stretch out and rest. On landing, one brake went out and Stephens made almost 360° of a ground-loop before rolling to a stop.

"My poor copilot was pasted up against the side of the fuselage all the time we were going around," said Stephens. "And to make matters worse, there was an influential stockbroker watching the landing!"

One day Stephens picked up the phone in Hollywood and the voice on the other end of the line said, "My name is Richard Halliburton. I'm planning a vagabond journey around the world. Would you like to be my pilot?"

Stephens found out later that Department of Commerce Inspector Jimmy Knoll had recommended him to the writer after Halliburton had asked for a really good pilot—not someone who was an out-of-work airplane driver during the depression.

"I gulped for a minute," said Stephens, "and answered, 'If I can get a leave from the airline, I'll go.'"

Later, he found out that the trip would take nearly two years and the airline would offer a leave of absence for only 12 months. So Stephens resigned to go with Halliburton.

"Originally, we were scheduled to use an old American Eagle powered with one of only two experimental 200 h.p. Kinner engines ever built," said

(Continued on page 45)

"The Flying Carpet" completed its journey in Manila, from where it was shipped to the United States. Here the pontoon-equipped Stearman C3B is seen on the final leg of its journey over Manila Bay (From *The Flying Carpet* by Richard Halliburton, copyright 1932 by the Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1960, by the First National Bank of Memphis. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.)



After 'The Flying Carpet'

(Continued from page 42)

Stephens. "This combination was not noted for its dependability so I finally convinced Halliburton that we should purchase a 1928 Stearman with a Wright J-5 up front.

"We had two forced landings between Los Angeles and New York. Both took place exactly an hour and a half after takeoff," said Stephens, "so I took the plane to the Wright engine factory at Teterboro, N.J., and had them completely disassemble the powerplant. They found that the cam-follower guide gaskets had been put on with shellac during an overhaul and it took 90 minutes of flight time to heat the shellac up to the point where it would melt and run into the followers, causing them to stick.

"Once this was fixed, we flew the ship more than 400 hours—over 40,000 miles—without a forced landing. In fact, I changed only one rocker-arm on the entire two-year trip."

"The Flying Carpet" was strictly stock except for two extra 17-gallon fuel tanks. Because of these tanks, the Stearman was flown on an "R" (restricted) license.

The Stearman was crated, shipped to London and reassembled. In the British Capital, Stephens purchased a beautiful set of maps for the entire route from the Sanford Map Company. These were strip maps, cemented to cloth. Maps covering the second half of the flight were shipped ahead by air to Calcutta, and never arrived. Stephens flew the second half of the trip with marine charts that showed coastlines accurately and were "good enough" for aerial navigation.

First destination from London was Timbuctoo because the pair had heard that this was a good spot in which to recover from the British flu.

This world junket made a fine adventure book in 1932, one that many of today's pilots would enjoy reading. It included a slow roll over the Taj Mahal, taking the first air pictures of Mt. Everest and visits to the head hunters of Borneo.

During an aerobatic demonstration at the Heliopolis Airport in Cairo, Stephens did a slow roll with Halliburton riding in the front pit. Both were wearing parachutes, but the author had forgotten to tighten his safety belt and came out of the pit "up to his hips."

In addition to 'chutes, the pair carried hand guns and considerable spare ammunition in a hidden compartment under the front floorboards. Stephens had a regular factory tool kit (they came with all new airplanes in those days) and his early training as a "grease monkey" was invaluable on the trip.

Before departing on the rugged hop between Baghdad and Teheran, where the peaks reach to 14,000 feet, Stephens talked with two German airline pilots who flew the route in a single-engine Junkers. He asked them to check his

maps for accuracy and found that there was at least a little to be desired. One lake, for instance, was marked over 20 miles from its actual location.

"The Germans said that they were scheduled to take off at 5 a.m. on Thursday and that they'd be happy to show me the way," explained Stephens. "The Junkers had a full load of passengers and mail but was still faster than the Stearman, so the airline crew would fly ahead for a few miles, then circle until we caught up with them. Imagine doing that on a scheduled run—and with a full payload!

"We landed at Kermanshaw, Persia (now West Iran), halfway to Teheran, to clear customs. The airline plane went through without delay but we were tied up for hours with red tape. The German crew offered to wait, but I talked them into going on because navigation on the second half of the flight was fairly simple. This airline crew was really cooperative, and I never did find out their names."

In Singapore, the Stearman was put on a pair of floats originally designed for a 3,400-pound Fairchild. Stephens recalls that the Stearman weighed in the neighborhood of 1,800 pounds. The floats had been shipped without any struts, so Stephens hung the C3B from the top of a hangar, figured the center of gravity of the floats on a saw-horse and "eye-balled" the installation, utilizing boiler tubing.

"It only slowed us down about 10 m.p.h.," he commented.

Then the pair visited the head hunting tribes of Borneo. While pulling up the anchor near Pontianak, Halliburton inadvertently let the anchor line swing into the propeller, putting it four inches out of line and narrowly missing the writer. Stephens straightened the prop with a "C" clamp and three heavy pieces of wood. His log book reads, "Straightened prop. Dick threw rope into it."

The single mechanical precaution on the world tour was to ship one complete cylinder ahead on the airlines. Except for a single rocker-arm, no maintenance was required.

The flight ended in Manila, where the Stearman was shipped back to San Francisco. "The Flying Carpet" was sold and finally wrecked in Honolulu after it had been reassembled with the ailerons hooked-up backwards.

During his stay in Manila, Stephens made two trips flying the mail from the Capital to Baguio, the summer Capital, an hour and a half distant by J65 Waco. The regular pilot had the only commercial license in the Philippines at the time and hadn't been able to take a day off in nearly two years.

Stephens received no salary for his flying assignment with Halliburton. "I had an unlimited expense account and we lived like kings," he recalls. "Dick was getting \$400 a talk on his lecture tours and, in those days, airplanes were a great novelty so we were wine and dined by leading personalities at almost every stop. This friendship was partially due to 'The Flying Carpet,' but

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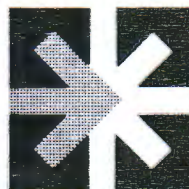
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also because of Dick's world-wide reputation as a writer. His books have been translated into 18 languages."

When he returned to the States, Stephens didn't go back with TWA and turned down an offer to fly for Western Air Express (later Western Airlines). At the urging of his father, a prominent Los Angeles lawyer, that he "settle down and do something sensible," he spent the next four years as production manager of Glass Containers, Inc. At about that same time, he had the opportunity to buy 10% of Lockheed Aircraft Corporation, at the inception of the present company, for \$5,000 but couldn't raise the money.

However, Stephens couldn't stay completely away from aviation and was soon associated with Norman Larson and Ivar Axelson of Pacific Aircraft Sales. During his years at Stanford, he had taught Larson to fly. He met and married Inez and the couple took a six-month leave to combine a honeymoon with a flying assignment for Lockheed Aircraft in Australia and New Zealand. Here Stephens checked out pilots for Ansett, Union and Guinea Airways in the new Lockheed 10's, the original *Electra*.

Just before departing for Australia, Stephens spoke with Amelia Earhart and talked over the areas that he had flown and she hoped to fly. While in Australia, he talked with the meteorologist who briefed the aviatrix at Darwin just before she disappeared. Stephens is convinced that she ditched in the Pacific after running out of fuel and was not taken prisoner by the Japanese.

In the pre-war years, Stephens became associated with Jack Northrop and helped establish the Northrop Aircraft Corporation. Here he had the unusual dual assignment of company secretary and test pilot, with a starting salary of \$250 a month. After Vance Breese made the initial flight in the prototype NIM *Flying Wing*, Stephens took over as an alternate pilot on the test program. The NIM had a wing that was adjustable on the ground for sweepback and dihedral. The original configuration was powered with two 85 h.p. Continental engines that couldn't get the 4,000-pound plane any higher than the ground effect during flights on the dry lake at Baker, Calif., and later at what is now Edwards AFB.

On one of the early flights in the NIM at Baker, Stephens was about 10 feet in the air—as high as he could get with the small engines—when one foot of a propeller tip parted company. Vibration was so extreme that it broke a rear spar, but the pilot was able to touch down before anything folded.

Later the powerplants were upped to two 117 h.p. Franklins and Stephens logged some 50 hours in the tricky experimental plane, the forerunner of the huge eight-engine Northrop *Flying Wings*.

When asked about the various misadventures that befall a test pilot, Stephens is very quiet. Only when

urged will he mention casually that "one flap collapsed on a Vultee A-31 *Vengeance* just as I came in on final approach to the Northrop airport in Hawthorne. It took nose down control, full opposite rudder and aileron plus full power to make the field right side up. The ship touched down at about 150 m.p.h. on the 5,000-foot runway."

Stephens remained with Northrop throughout the War, combining "flying a desk" with active test flying. As soon as the war was over, he and his family went to Brazil, where Stephens felt there was an opportunity to start an aerial merchandising business. He planned to capitalize on the lack of surface transportation by purchasing goods at coastal centers of population and selling them in the interior. His ultimate target was the cattle industry which was being conducted in Brazil "much as it was in the days of the Old West. Cattle raised in the interior 'Mato Grosso' were being driven great distances to railheads near the coast, where they were fattened prior to slaughtering."

Stephens figured that, with proper freight planes, the aerial merchandising of beef and other commodities promised a potential of better than \$1 million annually.

After a year spent in obtaining a franchise from the Brazilian government, he returned to the United States to buy a Nordyn *Norseman* which he ferried back to Brazil to start the ball rolling. At this time, on the advice of his young son's doctor, he sold out to his partner and returned with the youngster to the more healthful climate of California.

When he started his own sales organization and found that he needed a plane to cover his West Coast territory, he called his former partner, Norm Larson, who is now the Beechcraft distributor for the area—and waited six months for the right used plane to show up. It was an original Model 35 *Bonanza* that the Stephens' flew for the following six years, averaging 150 hours annually on business trips. Recently he turned in "The Little Pot" on the Model H *Bonanza* that he now flies.

Despite over 40 years of flying, Stephens figures that he has logged only somewhere between 5,000 and 6,000 hours. There's no "Schaffer time" here. Generally speaking, he won't fly enroute or night IFR, believing that this type of flying should be "left to the boys who are doing it day in, day out, with all-weather airplanes."

If, on the dusty shelves of a second-hand bookstore, you should see a copy of "The Flying Carpet," you'll find the dedication page "to Moye W. Stephens, Jr., who piloted The Flying Carpet."

In a personal copy autographed in November, 1932, Halliburton penned, "For Moye—the best pilot in the world!"

And should you unearth a copy of this flying book, buy it on the spot. The colorful material makes a fine addition to any pilot's library. ●

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