

CHAPTER XIX

THE FLIGHT OF THE AGE

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AIRPORT HAS BROUGHT FAME TO OAKLAND

Oakland's policy of establishing a municipal air port on Bay Farm Island has brought fame to the city, and has advertised Alameda County in recent months even more than its wonderful harbor, its enticing climate and its marvelous products produced on its farms. The airport has already justified its purchase and improvement. It has been the scene of stirring events—events that have held millions of people throughout the world in suspense and excitement. The Oakland airport has added at least three big events in the romance of the air, and has justly earned a foremost place among the large aviation fields of the nation and of the world. These three flying events, taking place during the summer of 1927, were those of Lieutenants Maitland and Hegenberger, the first army flyers to hop from the mainland to Hawaii; the flight of Ernie Smith and Emory Bronte in the "City of Oakland"; and the famous Dole flight in August. The last event may well be called the flight of the ages. No race has ever equalled it. No flying test has ever created an interest comparable to that which held nations in its grasp for days during August of last year.

DOLE ANNOUNCES PRIZES

When James Dole, the Hawaiian pineapple king, offered \$35,000 in prizes for a race from the mainland to Honolulu, his chief interest

was in the elimination of time in traveling between the two points. He undoubtedly did not realize that he was starting the greatest race of all time, a race in which physical endurance, mental alertness and mechanical perfection was to be pitted against similar qualities to a degree never before witnessed. Soon after he announced his prizes—\$25,000 for the first successful plane, and \$10,000 as second money—some thirty flyers throughout the nation announced their intention of entering the contest. But when the closing day for entering the flight arrived—August 2nd—the number had dwindled down to sixteen. No starting place was designated, but on account of the advantageously long take-off of the Oakland port, all flyers who qualified selected Oakland as a starting place. The heavy load necessary for the trip eliminated the consideration entirely of shorter fields.

The National Aeronautics Association was given complete charge of the flight, with power to make all rules and regulations and to inspect each plane and examine each pilot and navigator. The Department of Commerce appointed Maj. Clarence M. Young as chief airplane inspector, with Capt. Walter F. Parkin and Maj. W. N. Breingan as aides. Lieut. Ben Wyatt of the Twelfth Naval District, one of the navy's most noted pilots, was appointed by the flight committee to test the planes and navigators. On August 2nd the starting committee recommended a postponement of two weeks, but this action produced a storm of protests from some of the flyers and their backers. The committee in Honolulu refused to grant the delay. Only four flyers had qualified up to this time—Jack Frost, Lieutenant Goddard, Griffin and Irving. The other pilots announced that they would hop off at noon Friday despite the action of the local committee, and even though all tests had not been completed. However, after a number of conferences, the four who had passed the tests agreed to wait until noon Tuesday in order to give all an opportunity for thorough examination and adjustments to the ships entered. It was further agreed that all tests should be completed by Monday noon, August 15th, in order to give all concerned a full day in which to rest before the hop off. A new starting order was then arranged with the Oklahoma first, El Encanto second, Pabco third, and the Golden Eagle fourth. The others were to take positions in the order in which they might qualify.

MAJOR IRVING ENTERS RACE

Among the early entrants was Maj. Livingston Irving, of Berkeley, who was backed by the Parafine Companies, Incorporated. He had

served with the Lafayette Escadrille during the World war, and had won a Distinguished Service Cross while in service in France. His airplane was built in San Francisco, and was assembled there on July 11th. Arthur C. Goebel, of Santa Monica, placed his entry with the committee on June 27th. His ship was named the "Woolaroc"—so called in honor of a ranch of the same name in Oklahoma, owned by Frank Phillips. Frank Phillips, of the Phillips Petroleum Company of that state, was one of the financial backers of Goddard, along with a group of friends living in Beverly Hills. Goddard's plane was built in Wichita, Kansas. He flew it to Bartlesville, thence to Clover Field, Santa Monica; and then to Oakland. Lieut. William V. Davis, of the navy, was chosen as navigator of the "Woolaroc" by Goddard. The "Miss Doran," a Buhl biplane, named for its fair passenger, Miss Mildred Doran, a school teacher of Flint, Michigan, was entered in the race on July 9th. John Auggy Pedlar, of the same city, was its pilot. Detroit's "Goodwill Messenger," another biplane, piloted by Frederick A. Giles, noted Australian flyer who gained additional notoriety in November, 1927, by additional attempts to fly to Hawaii, entered the contest on July 18th. However, he withdrew from the race when complete tests could not be made.

The "City of Peoria," an Air King special biplane, was entered on July 18th, by Charles W. Parkhurst, owner of the National Airways System, at Lomax, Illinois. Parkhurst had been a stunt flyer around Hollywood and a circus performer. His navigator was Ralph C. Lowes, who had served as a lieutenant on a destroyer during the late war. The "El Encanto," an all-metal monoplane designed and constructed by Lieut. Norman A. Goddard, U. S. N. R., was entered July 27th. Goddard selected as his pilot Lieut. K. C. Hawkins of the San Diego naval air station. Goddard, who was thirty-two years old, had served with the Royal Flying Corps of England during the war, and had been engaged in commercial flying at San Diego since 1921. His navigator, Hawkins, started flying in 1923, and is a graduate of the United States Naval Academy. The "El Encanto" flew from San Diego to the Oakland airport in six hours and three minutes. The "Dallas Spirit," a Swallow monoplane, was listed as an entrant the day following that of the Goddard's machine. Its pilot was Capt. William P. Erwin, who also started out from Dallas, Texas, with the intention of winning the Easterwood prize of \$25,000 for the first successful flight from that city to Hong Kong, China, in a total elapsed time of 300 hours. Captain Erwin planned on taking his wife along on the Oak-

land-Honolulu flight as pilot, but she was disqualified because she was not quite twenty-one years of age. Erwin was also the possessor of a Distinguished Service Cross and other decorations of valor, having been credited with bringing down eleven German planes during the war. Shortly before the start Alvin H. Eichwaldt, of Hayward, was chosen to navigate the "Dallas Spirit."

MARTIN JENSEN AND HIS DIFFICULTIES

The "Oklahoma," a Travelair monoplane with a span of fifty-one feet and a total wing area of 350 square feet and a gas capacity of 480 gallons, was the entry of the Phillips Petroleum Company. It was entered in the race July 29th, with Bennett H. Griffin of Oklahoma City as pilot, and Al. Henley of Bartlesville as navigator. Griffin, a graduate of the University of Oklahoma, was a former army flyer, as was his navigator. Both were thirty-one years of age. The "Golden Eagle," a Lockheed cantilever monoplane, entered the list on August 1st, with John ("Jack") W. Frost as pilot and Gordon Scott as navigator. Hearst newspapers were the backers of the "Golden Eagle." Martin Jensen, of Honolulu, was the last entry of the race, giving his formal announcement to the committee on August 2nd. His ship, the "Aloha," was a Breese monoplane. Jensen, winner of second place in the race, with the aid of a confident wife, overcame many difficulties in time to participate. Raising some money in Honolulu, Jensen came to California hoping to interest additional financial support here. He was turned down in his appeals time after time, and decided to abandon his plans. His wife at home, however, continued her efforts, and cabled the welcome news to Jensen that she had enlisted the necessary support from their own townspeople. Rushing to San Francisco, Jensen negotiated for a Breese monoplane which had been started for Claire Vance, an air mail pilot who had to abandon his plans of entering the Dole race when financial backing failed him. The ship was rushed to completion, equipped with only two forty-gallon gas tanks, one in each wing. It was planned to carry the extra supply of gasoline in five-gallon cans to be used as the flight proceeded. This plan had to be changed, and the necessary tanks installed to carry the 350 gallons necessary. Local newspapers stated that Jensen was looking for a pilot a few days before the race was scheduled to start, and Fred Jacobson, Jr., an Eagle Boy Scout of Alameda, and only 16 years of

age, applied for the position. Jensen praised the boy's pluck, but finally chose Paul Schlueter, master of the steamship "Nome City" of the Charles Nelson line.

THREE ENTRIES CRASH BEFORE RACE

Three planes entered in the race crashed in California before the day of the take-off, resulting in the death of three courageous flyers. The first to crash was at San Diego, when a low wing monoplane backed by Fred Durg of Los Angeles dropped during a preliminary flight. Lieut. George Covell and R. S. Waggoner, both naval officers, were killed. The second crash was at Oakland, but the pilot, navigator and a passenger escaped serious injury. This ship was the "Pride of Los Angeles," an International Special triplane. In a test flight a day or so before the take-off this plane dropped into shallow water in the bay, and while the three men in it escaped with only a thorough wetting, the plane was eliminated from the contest. The pilot was Capt. James L. Griffin; navigator, Theodore Lundgren; and Lawrence Weill, a passenger. The third plane to meet serious disaster was the "Angel," also of Los Angeles. Capt. Arthur V. Rogers, its pilot, was killed during a test flight at Montebello, California. This ship was of unusual design, being a cantilever monoplane with a split tail and carrying two tandem motors. It was the only plane entered that carried other than a Wright Whirlwind motor. The remaining entries, for various reasons, failed to arrive at the Oakland Airport in time for the race. Some were compelled to give up the flight because of lack of time in which to prepare; others failed to secure the necessary financial support.

FLYERS SELECT THE OAKLAND FIELD

When the race was first announced it was generally believed that the flight would start at Mills Field, near San Francisco. Oakland officials made redoubled efforts to place the field in shape for the race, and when the final choice was made it was unanimous that the Bay Farm site was the best suited for the event. The runway at Mills Field is 5,700 feet long—longer than many big fields of the nation—and which is long enough for ordinary commercial purposes. But the Oakland port afforded a runway 2,000 feet longer than that at Mills Field, and this important feature led to its selection. It was feared that the heavily loaded ships would have difficulty in hopping off on the shorter

field. At the time of the race the field was cleared and leveled to a width of 1,000 feet at the starting line, and gradually narrowed down to about three hundred feet at the other end. A restaurant was established in a large tent, but so far the improvements did not include a hangar. The large number of press correspondents which gathered on the field several days before August 16th found accommodations in tents and protable garages. A rough administration building was erected—a frame shack 15 by 20 feet in size. A small frame machine shop, 10 feet by 10, was also erected.

THE BIG DAY ARRIVES

The eyes of the nation were trained upon Oakland on Tuesday, August 16th. It was an important day in the history of Alameda County. The largest crowd ever assembled within its boundaries to witness any event gathered around the Bay Farm Airport. It seemed that everyone in the great Bay section who could take the time was there to witness the greatest sporting event of flying. Various estimates of the great mass of people were made, all the way from well over one hundred thousand people to a quarter of a million. Many not fortunate enough to witness the actual take-off were able to secure a glimpse of the ships from tops of buildings and other points of vantage. Nothing has ever created such excitement locally, not even the arrival of the famous Col. Charles Lindbergh a few weeks later. Perhaps, I should limit this statement regarding the take-off, to the excitement and suspense of the next few days—to the universal rejoicing upon the safe arrival of two of the planes, and to the stubborn hopes that the seven other brave souls who got away would be found before it was too late.

Nine planes were lined up for the start, but one of these was disqualified. This was the "Air King" from Lomax, Illinois, with Charles W. Parkhurst as pilot. It was not permitted to participate because of insufficient gasoline capacity. The "Hollydale," with Frank Clark as pilot, and entered from Los Angeles, was another ship barred just before the start for the same reason. Although the start was not scheduled to take place until noon, crowds began assembling at the grounds early; and by 12 o'clock parking space for automobiles was almost impossible to be found. There was not much activity around the ships during the forenoon, save for a last minute inspection of engines and instruments which had already been closely inspected and

guarded. The sixteen principals, including the only woman to dare the flight—Miss Mildred Doran—passed some of the forenoon minutes chatting with friends, writing autographs, posing for pictures, with expressions indicating nothing but confidence untouched by fears of disaster. Those last hours of waiting must have been a severe test for those sixteen, for even those on the sidelines became more and more excited as the big hour approached.

TWO CRASH ON TAKEOFF

Just before noon the police detailed to keep order at the field cleared the enclosed runway, and the officials took their places. Promptly at 12 o'clock starter Ed. Howard dropped the checkered flag. The "Oklahoma," with Bennett H. Griffin as pilot, and Al. Henley as navigator, moved down the runway. Half way down the field the "Oklahoma" left the ground amid the cheers of a great multitude, and the great Dole race was on. Before the dust had hardly settled, Lieut. Norman A. Goddard taxied slowly out from the semi-circle back of the starting line with his "El Encanto." The white flag far down the field was waved before the starting line was reached, and with the drop of the checkered signal the "El Encanto" proceeded down the field without stopping. We who were standing on the sidelines half way down the field could plainly see that Goddard was having trouble in leaving the ground with his heavy load. It was also noticed by the time he had run down the field for a thousand feet or so that he was getting dangerously near the rough ground on his left, and that unless he rose soon he would be in danger of wrecking the machine. After three or four bounces, he finally got the machine off the ground, but not before a last uneven bounce, which probably threw the ship into a "ground turn" when not over twenty-five or thirty feet in the air. The ship lit on its left wing before making a complete turn, badly damaging that wing and the landing gear. A number of spectators narrowly escaped being hit as the machine came to earth. Neither Goddard nor his navigator, Lieut. K. C. Hawkins, was hurt. This disaster caused a delay of nearly ten minutes before the next ship left the starting line. At 12:10 Maj. Livingston Irving, the only pilot to attempt the flight without a companion and navigator, was given the starting signal. With his heavy load of gasoline he, too, had difficulty in leaving the ground, although the ship did get up a few feet. Before the end of the 7,000 foot runway was reached, Major Irving stopped his

machine and came to rest just before the end of the field was reached. This unsuccessful attempt placed Major Irving at the foot of the list, but it was not until 12:32 that the next signal was given for a start, as the Irving machine had to be towed off the runway before another flyer was allowed to start.

Jack Frost and Gordon Scott made a splendid take-off with the "Golden Eagle." One minute later the "Miss Doran" accomplished the feat amid the cheers and good-wishes of all. Martin Jensen and Paul Schlueter, in the "Aloha," were next; followed by Art Goebel and Lieut. William V. Davis in the "Woolaroc" at 12:36. Two minutes later the "Dallas Spirit" took the air. After the "Dallas Spirit" had gotten away safely Major Irving's "Pabco Flyer" was towed back to the starting point. But before he could make a second attempt the tens of thousands of spectators were thrown into intense excitement by the return of "Miss Doran," the "Dallas Spirit," and the "Oklahoma." The motor in the "Miss Doran" was not hitting just right; the fabric had been ripped from the "Dallas Spirit;" and the "Oklahoma" had motor trouble. While mechanics worked at top speed around the "Miss Doran" and the "Oklahoma," the checkered flag waved for the second time for Irving. The crowd cheered as he left the ground, but for a few feet, and it was evident that the heavy load was giving him trouble. The crowd was hoping that he could get up enough power to lift; but when about half way down the runway, and about twenty feet from ground, his plane crashed on its nose. It was badly damaged, and eliminated this worthy entrant.

MISS DORAN TRIES AGAIN

Mechanics swarmed about the "Miss Doran," and soon had the motor adjusted and the tanks replenished. It is said that advice was given to her not to make the second attempt; but the three aboard were determined. The courage of Miss Doran, of Pedlar, and of Knope was given the acid test as they looked down the field on their second start and saw the wrecks of the two planes, the "El Encanto" and the "Pacific Flyer." Her second take-off was perfect, and the crowds on the left of the great field got a glimpse of her as she waved her hands in farewell. At 2:43 she was reported passing over the Farallone Islands, and that was the last time her plane was seen.

It was a sleepless night at Honolulu. Theatres gave midnight shows, and the crowds that swarmed down-town clamored for the

latest bulletins. Excitement was at the highest pitch ever known in the history of the island. The big siren in the Aloha tower at Honolulu had shrieked when the cable had clicked "They're off." Early next morning (although the fastest plane was not due until about noon) a procession, like the one to the Oakland Field the day before, started for Wheeler Field, four miles from the city. The lines of welcome were worn under raincoats, for rain squalls had swept the vicinity during the night. Daylight saw a huge crowd already seeking places of vantage. When Jensen had left the Oakland Field his manager, C. E. Cross, had cabled to Mrs. Marguerite Jensen: "Marty made a great take-off. Be sure to have breakfast ready."

GOEBEL ARRIVES FIRST

Art Goebel, with his naval navigator, Lieut. William V. Davis, landed at twenty-three minutes, thirty-three seconds past 12 o'clock, Honolulu time, or fifty-three minutes, thirty-three seconds past two, Oakland time, August 17th. His elapsed time was twenty-six hours, seventeen minutes, and thirty-three seconds from the moment he left the starting line on Bay Farm Island. Governor Wallace R. Farrington was there to welcome the aviators; and so was James Dole, the sponsor of the flight. Dole was almost ready to collapse from nervous strain as Goebel landed. Guns roared a salute. Goebel and Davis were overjoyed when informed that they had beaten the field. Mrs. Jensen came forward to greet the winners, but collapsed and had to be carried from the scene. Martin Jensen and his navigator, Paul Schlueter, were lost for several hours, but finally got their correct bearing, headed for Wheeler Field and landed at twenty minutes past two, or 4:50 Oakland time. Their time was twenty-eight hours and sixteen minutes. Their reception was even more marked than that given the winners, for Jensen was among his own neighbors. When Goebel landed his supply of gasoline was sufficient for about five more hours of flying.

LONG SEARCH FOR MISSING FLYERS

As the afternoon of the 17th wore on anxiety heightened for the safety of the Lockheed monoplane, "Golden Eagle," and the Buhl biplane, "Miss Doran." The "Golden Eagle" was one of the prettiest ships in the race, and was reputed to have been the fastest. Many had picked Scott to win. The fuel supply of both planes was sufficient

for only about thirty hours. They must land before six o'clock to reach their goal. The "Golden Eagle" had left at 12:31 Tuesday, and the plane of the famous school teacher at 2:03. At 10:40 that night the navy department ordered the aircraft carrier "Langley" and the tender "Aroostook" to put out from San Diego and commence the search for the missing flyers—a search that was continued for days. In the days that followed the navy had fifty-four vessels from the battle fleet actively engaged in the search. These ships searched a total of approximately three hundred and fifty thousand miles, and used up 3,835,050 gallons of fuel oil and gasoline. In addition many commercial vessels joined in the search, and boats were chartered from the Honolulu side to scan the seas around the islands.

Capt. William P. Erwin, whose young bride was in the East, announced that he would hop off from Oakland in a zig-zag course for Honolulu to search for the missing flyers. With Alvin Eichwaldt, the Hayward navigator, the Swallow monoplane "Dallas Spirit" took off shortly after noon on the 19th, on its flight of mercy. At 9:02 that night Eichwaldt, who had been in frequent communication with local radio stations, sent out an S. O. S., reading: "We are in a tail spin. Delay that. We are out of it O. K., but we sure got a scare. It sure was a close call. Thought it was all over, but came out of it. The lights on the instrument board went out—." And then at 9:05 came the second S. O. S.: "We are in another t—." There the message broke off. It was estimated that they were then about six hundred miles out from Oakland. The "Dallas Spirit" was now added to the list of the missing, and also became an added object of the search. On August 25th the navy department ordered a second extension of the search for another five days, but it seemed apparent that Miss Doran, Pedlar, Knope, Frost, Scott, Erwin and Eichwaldt had all perished. Newspapers, radio stations, and other places of information were besieged with floods of inquiries during the search. Extra editions of the newspapers in the Bay region appeared every few hours, and one radio station did not sign off for several days and nights, breaking all records for continuous broadcasting. An unconfirmed report from the Island of Maui on the evening of August 18th to the effect that the "Miss Doran" had been found, with all aboard safe, electrified the world. For several hours this belief existed, until the error was discovered. This news flash caused almost as widespread and enthusiastic rejoicing as did the first false report of the signing of the armistice in November, 1918.

And thus the unsolved mysteries of the seas have been increased in numbers. The strange tales of old about the "Panviego," the "Epervies," the "Wasp," the "Levant," the "Albany;" and of the "Cyclops" in more recent years, hold the interest of all. But the stories of the "Miss Doran," of the "Golden Eagle," and of the "Dallas Spirit" will live forever; and the thousands who gathered around the Oakland Airport on that balmy day in August, 1927, were given a thrill never to be forgotten.

SOMETHING ABOUT THE FLYERS

Maj. Livingston Irving, of Berkeley, was a veteran of the World war, having served with the heroic Lafayette escadrille. He flew on five battle-fronts, and received eight decorations. He was backed in his venture by friends of the Parafine Companies, Inc., where he was employed in the engineering department. He had no pilot, deciding to act as both pilot and navigator. Irving was the oldest man entered, being 32. Erwin, like Irving, won a Distinguished Service Cross in the late war. He had entered the Easterwood contest to win the \$25,000 offered for the first successful flight from Dallas, Texas, to Hongkong, China; and the Honolulu hop was to be a part of that attempt. He had intended to take his wife as pilot, but she was disqualified because of her age and inexperience. She was under twenty-one. Erwin had credit for bringing down eleven German planes during his war service. Alvin H. Eichwaldt, aged twenty-six and unmarried, was the son of Mrs. Florence E. Eichwaldt of Hayward. He had attended school in Alameda and St. Joseph's in Berkeley. He served in the navy during the war. Eichwaldt had installed the instrument board in the "City of Oakland" for Smith and Bronte before their famous flight, and had offered to go with Smith as navigator after Carter had withdrawn. Mildred Doran was twenty-two years of age, the daughter of William A. Doran, of Flint, Michigan. Her mother was dead, and she had taught school for two years. She was not a licensed navigator or pilot. Auggy Pedlar, the youngest of the flyers, was born in Butte, Montana, and was twenty-four years old. He and Miss Doran were backed by William Malloska, an aged capitalist of Flint, who went to Honolulu to welcome the plane on its arrival. The "Miss Doran" flew from Michigan to Oakland, covering 4,000 miles, and arrived here August 6. They came by way of Fort Worth, Texas, having left Flint on July 11th.

Vilas R. Knope, the pilot, aged thirty, was married and had one daughter. He was a graduate of Annapolis, and served two years under Com. John Rodgers. He was on a thirty-day leave of absence.

Gordon Scott was born in South Africa, and was twenty-six years of age. He was a sea navigator, and had been a member of the famous Wilkins polar expedition. He was unmarried. Lieutenant John W. Frost, also unmarried, was twenty-nine years of age, and was born in Chicago. He was a wing walker and stunt flyer, and had toured Europe in a plane after the war. His flying experience included over five thousand hours. He had lived in Los Angeles for four years prior to the Dole flight. Arthur C. Goebel, of Clover Field, Santa Monica, was thirty-one, and was born in southern California. He entered flying in 1917, became a movie thriller, mail pilot, and commercial flyer. He was backed solely by Frank Phillips, one of the three who financed the "Oklahoma." Lieut. William V. Davis, Jr., graduated from Annapolis in 1923, and secured a leave of absence to accompany Goebel. Goebel had at first intended flying alone, but his plans were changed shortly before the take-off. Davis was twenty-nine years old, and his home is in Atlanta, Georgia. Martin Jensen, entered from Honolulu, was twenty-six and married. He was born in Jamestown, Kansas. His marriage took place at Yuma, or over Yuma in an airplane, in 1925. He had entered the navy in 1919, but retired in 1926 to become a commercial flyer. His wife aided greatly in financing the flight. Paul H. Schlueter was the oldest man entered in the race—thirty-eight. He was born in Germany, but came to the United States in 1906, and served in the American army during the war. He was a sea captain, and a few days prior to the flight resigned as commanding officer of the "Nome City" at San Francisco in order to accompany Jensen as navigator.

Lieut. Norman A. Goddard, of the navy, was also married. He was born in Liverpool, England, and served with the Royal Flying Corps during the World war. Since 1921 he had been flying at San Diego. Lieut. Kenneth C. Hawkins was born at Wilkes-Barre, Pa., was married and twenty-nine years of age. He graduated from Annapolis in 1919, and was an experienced navigator and radio expert. Bennett H. Griffin of Oklahoma City, was born in Mississippi, and graduated from the University of Oklahoma, where he had played football. Al. Henley, his navigator, also came from Oklahoma, and was married. Both Griffin and Henley were thirty-one years of age.

THE MAITLAND AND SMITH FLIGHTS

The Dole flight was the greatest sporting event in the history of aviation. It brought undying fame for four; it spread the supremacy of the Oakland airport; and, the saddest phase of all, it resulted in the death of ten flyers. Aside from the famous Lindbergh flight, it was the outstanding achievement of the year. But honor was won by four other flyers using the new Oakland field before the Dole flight was held; and the names of those four flyers will go down in history as heroes of the air.

The United States navy had been making quiet plans for several months early in 1927 to win the distinction of being first to fly from the mainland to Honolulu. On June 20 the Oakland Port Commission received word from Washington that the Bay Farm Island airport had been officially selected for the flight of Lieut. Lester J. Maitland and Albert J. Hegenberger, and Maj. Gen. Mason Patrick hurried to Oakland to meet the flyers, who arrived here June 25. About this time Ernest Smith, of Oakland, also announced his intention of making the flight, with Capt. C. H. Carter as navigator. Smith's backers announced on June 21 that the flight would take place early the following week. Smith intended to start from San Francisco, but he was denied the use of a field, and efforts were made to prevent his plans being carried out. They then turned to the Oakland field. It now developed into a race between the navy flyers and Smith to win first honors.

At 7:08, Tuesday morning, June 28, Lieut. Maitland and Hegenberger took off from the local airport. Over in Honolulu, Richard Grace, the "broken neck" aviator who had made a couple of unsuccessful attempts from this side in the few weeks previous, announced that he would leave that city for the mainland. But his hard luck continued with him, and a broken propeller caused him to abandon his efforts. At 9:37 on June 28, Smith and Carter made a perfect take-off to try to beat the navy officers. But ten minutes later they came back, a broken deflector over the cockpit spelling defeat for the time being.

Maitland and Hegenberger landed at Wheeler Field at 6:29 A. M., Honolulu time, on the following day, having been in the air for 25 hours and 58 minutes. Their flight was the result of several months of careful planning.

The Smith start was delayed for one cause and another until July 14, when 10,000 people were on hand to see the local man leave the airport at 10:39 A. M. Emory Bronte had replaced Carter as navi-

gator. The two daring pilots had planned on leaving at 7 o'clock; but fog prevented. Smith and Bronte nearly lost their lives in a drop which may have been at about the point where the Dole flyers were later lost. After several hours during which the world received no word from the flyers, and during which they were not sure of their bearings, the flyers landed at Kaunakakai, Island of Molokai, at 9:35 A. M., July 15. Maitland, Hegenberger, Smith and Bronte were given ovations in Hawaii; and upon their return to the Bay region were welcomed with the acclaim due them for their daring feats.

Although the Oakland airport was but a few months old, and had to be hastily put into condition for these big events in aviation history, it was the seat of more important flying features than any other field during 1927. And to crown all, on September 17 the famous Col. Charles A. Lindbergh brought his "Spirit of St. Louis" to rest upon the spot where history had so recently been made. Lindbergh, on his trip around the nation after his wonderful flight to Paris from New York, dedicated the Oakland field on his visit, and also a bronze plaque in honor of Maitland and Hegenberger. Fifty thousand East Bay residents, including some ten thousand anxious school children, were on hand to welcome "Lindy" at the Bay Farm airport. The port itself, and the aviators who had made flying history here, were praised by the renowned "Lone Eagle."