

Round-the-World Flight of British Aviators

(Photos reproduced by courtesy of the Montreal Daily Star)



Major Wilfred T. Blake

A WOMAN'S self sacrifice has made possible an attempt to make the first aeroplane flight around the world.

The death of Sir Ross Smith on the eve of his projected round-the-world flight decided his brother, Sir Keith Smith, who was to have been his companion, to abandon the project. British air officials called for volunteers.

Major W. T. Blake, a noted flier and newspaperman, was appealed to as the man best fitted to undertake the task.

"I have a family," said Blake. "Ask my wife. If she agrees, I'll go."

Mrs. Blake didn't hesitate. "Go!" she said. "It is for the glory of Britain. Britain before family!"

So Major Blake is on his way. He hopped off May 24, the day honored throughout British dominions as Empire Day, and expected to finish his trip in two months.

Funds Subscribed

Private funds have been subscribed for four planes he and Captain Norman MacMillan, who once flew to Morocco with Blake, will use on the round-the-world flight. A flying boat was planned at first, but Blake decided he could not afford to wait until it could be built.

"To wait would play into the hands of the Americans," he said. "I want to gain this honor for Britain."

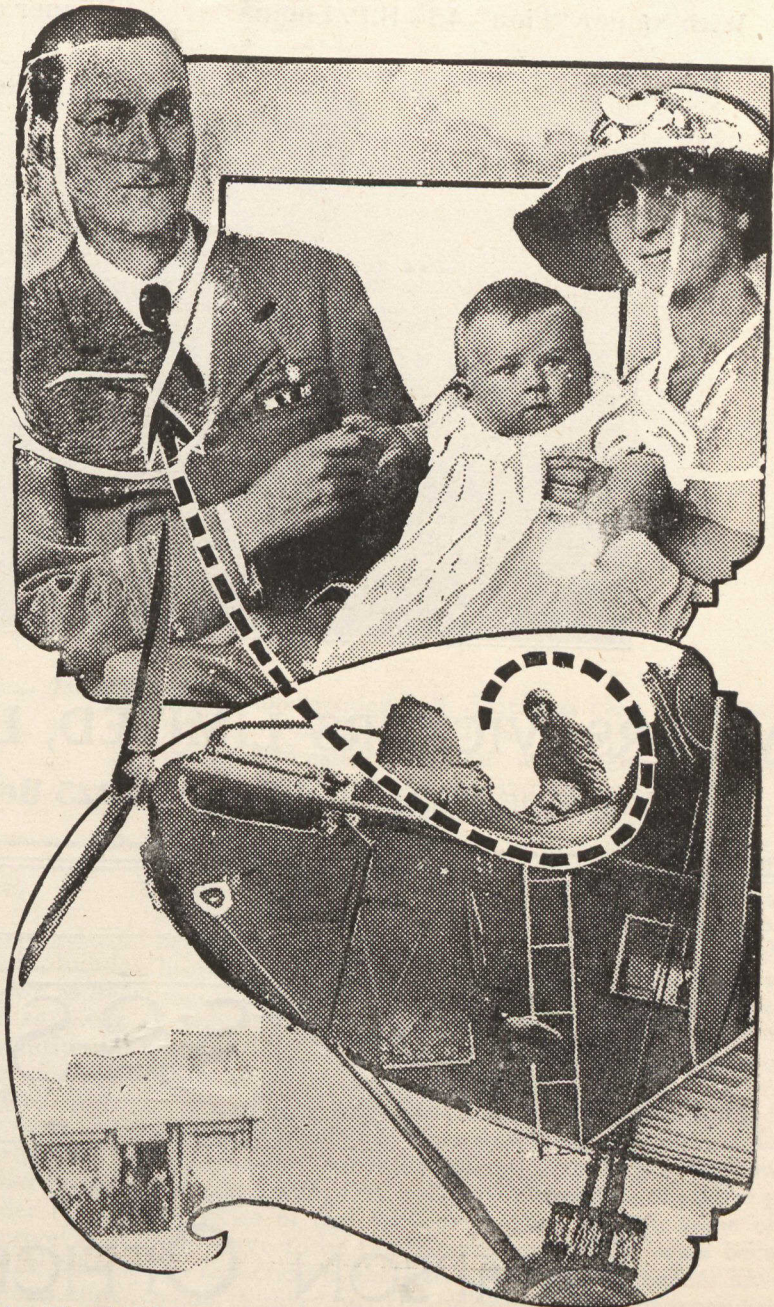
Blake and MacMillan left London in a huge DeHaviland "9" machine, a giant ship equipped with a 230 horsepower Siddely-Puma engine. In

it they hoped to reach Calcutta, covering 7,000 miles in the first stage of the flight, via Paris, Rome, Athens, Crete, Alexandria, Bagdad, Bazra, Kurachi and Delhi.

In Calcutta a second machine, a Fairey Seaplane, will be waiting, the parts having been sent there to be assembled. The second leg will be via Rangoon, Bangkok, Saigon, along the Chinese Coast, to Japan, Yokohama, then to Petropavlovk, and via the Aleutian Islands and the Alaskan coast to Vancouver.

Will Cross America

A third machine, another DeHaviland "9", will be waiting for the trip across Canada, to Chicago, New York, and thence to Newfoundland, where the fourth machine, an "F" 3 flying boat, will be picked up. The journey then will be across Greenland to Iceland, to the Faroe Islands and finally to Scotland, winding up at Aberdeen. The longest sea flight will be from the Faroe Islands to Scotland, about 850 miles.



Major W. T. Blake and his wife and baby, and the DeHaviland "9" machine in which he commenced his round-the-world flight; the size of the aeroplane is indicated by comparison of the figure of Blake who has just climbed the ladder to the pilot's seat.