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COMMANDER ALBERT C READ WELCOMED TO PROVIDENCE

He is met at the State Pier. From left to right are: H Nelson, Street Secretary of Conventions Committee; Ellsworth Sisson, President of the Providence Rotary Club; William H Griswold, President of the Kiwanis Club; Michael W Norton and J C Wayner, of the Conventions Committee; Lieutenant Commander Read, General Secretary Cotton, Captain M F Falk, Chairman of Air Service Committee; President George L Crooker, Councilman E Merle Bixby, Chief Crier Horace G Belcher, Town Criers of Rhode Island; and Lieutenant LeRoy C Flint

The Noted NC-4 and Crew Visit Providence

Lieutenant Commander Albert C Read and Members of the Crew Making the First Airplane Voyage Over the Atlantic Ocean, and Rhode Island Airmen Are Guests of the "Committee of 100" of the Providence Chamber of Commerce, the Kiwanis Club, the Town Criers, the Rotary Club, and the British Empire Club at a Lunch Served at the Narragansett Hotel, October 2 --- The Intrepid Skipper of the Air is Welcomed by Governor Beeckman, Mayor Gainer and Vice President Comstock --- His First Greeting However, Was at the State Pier, Where President George L Crooker Extended an Official Welcome.

PROVIDENCE was again honored by a distinguished visitor on October 2, when Lieutenant Commander Albert C Read, transatlantic skipper of the naval seaplane NC 4, was entertained at lunch at the Narragansett Hotel by the "Committee of 100" of the Providence Chamber of Commerce, the Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club, Town Criers, and the British Empire Club.

The other guests at lunch were Lieutenant Walter Hinton, pilot; Lieutenant HC Rodd, radio expert; Ensign P Talbot, Chief Boatswain's Mate; Daniel Moore, Chief Machinist's Mate; C I Kessler, Chief Machinist's Mate CS Rhodes and "Brownie" the dog taken as a mascot and pet with Lieutenant-Commander Read's crew on his memorable flight oversea, and sixteen veterans of the aeronautic division of the Rhode Island Naval Militia, a number of whom served under Commander Read at various stations during the war.

The NC 4 party is on recruiting duty from Maine to the Gulf of Mexico, and as Providence was included in its itinerary, President George L Crooker and General Secretary Cotton, of the Providence Chamber of Commerce for the organization, extended an invitation to its members to be the guests of the Chamber.

The fliers arrived at the State Pier on October 1 and were formally received and cordially greeted by President Crooker. For the following day a brilliant demonstration was planned, and, while the programme was carried out in all details, a rainstorm marred its brilliancy to some extent.

At 10:30 o'clock a parade was made, which was participated in by 300 naval apprentices from the Naval Training Station at Newport, the veteran Providence aviators and the reception committee from the various entertaining bodies. The start was from the State Pier, stops being made at the Chamber of Commerce building where Commander Read was received by General Secretary Cotton; at the State House, with a reception by Governor Beeckman, and the City Hall, where the officials of the party were received by Mayor Gainer and other city dignitaries.

The ball room of the Narragansett Hotel was filled to limit of seating capacity and the decorations were thoroughly American in character. Seated at the head table were:

William H Griswold, Edmond A Dreyfus, John Scheminger, Harold Congdon, Lieutenant LeRoy C Flint, Lieutenant Commander C N Weichett, M W Norton, Lieutenant Commander W Hinton, H G Belcher, Captain M F Falk, Lieutenant Commander J O Hoffman, Vice President Richard B Comstock, General Secretary Clarence A Cotton, Lieutenant Commander Albert C Read, Chairman T F I McDonnell, Governor R L Beeckman, Mayor Joseph H Gainer, James R McCall, Lieutenant Commander H C Rodd, Dr John M Peters, John A Gammons, Spencer H Over, Ellsworth Sisson, Major E Merle, Bixby J C Weyner, Commander H D Wilson, Colonel F R Wendelschafer, T H Rhodes, and Arthur B Lisle. During the lunch Brownie having been introduced to the company, sat on a radiator behind Chairman McDonnell during the entire session.

Welcomes on behalf of the state and city were extended Lieutenant Commander Read by Governor Beeckman and Mayor Gainer the latter asserting that in all our wars from the Revolution down, the Civil War excepted, the United States Navy had been the foremost branch of service, and that Commander Read's feat had been the crowning glory of the American navy and nation

A pleasing feature at this juncture was the presentation of a large bouquet of American Beauty roses to Commander Read, by the Rhode Island airmen. The gallant skipper of the air had just been introduced by Chairman McDonnell, the incident serving to increase the applause of the company.



LIEUTENANT COMMANDER READ IN THE NC-4

Commander Read said that he would not attempt to reel off the log of the NC 4, but would content himself with allusions to incidents, here and there, happening on the voyage, of a character which might prove more interesting considering the brief space of time allotted to him.

“Our contemplated feat” he continued, “was not wholly successful, for the navy had hoped to get three machines across, but in reality got but one over. The NC 4 met with a mishap which left her behind the other two planes, but that difficulty having been overcome, we made haste to join the others and got ready for a start. There was another delay occasioned by bad weather, and finally we put forth

“Sailing was easy until we were near the Azores, where we encountered fog, which was on the wind. Weather sharps and prophets have all along told us that fog and wind do not thus combine, but the crew of the NC 4 know that for once, at least, the wise ones were mistaken. There came a hole in the fog, we sighted one of the Azores, and made a landing. If it had not been for this fortunate rift in the dense fog bank, the NC 4 might have met with the same ill luck that befell the other two ships.

“The first leg of the voyage was without special incident, save that once we nearly went into a tailspin, which would have been disastrous. There was but little spare room and not much conversation carried on because of the great noise made by the propeller. We started out with ready-made rations including sandwiches that proved anything but alluring; still there was plenty of good and hot chocolate. None however was hungry or thirsty --- there was too much excitement. Some of the crew snatched moments of sleep by lying down in the bottom of the boat, but as for myself and the radio expert operator, we never closed our eyes for a minute.

“From the Azores across to Lisbon and Plymouth, the flight was quickly made --- we had crossed the Atlantic and had achieved what the navy had cut out for us _to accomplish. Arriving in England we were splendidly received and entertained. Since then I have been asked what we got out of the trip beside the foreign decorations. In reply I say --- the things that amounted to most were the things we learned; not what we received. We obtained direct, firsthand information through experience, concerning things the navy is greatly interested in. Knowledge that we did so is our chief compensation.

“One thing which struck me very forcibly is that the people of England seem to be far more interested in flying than we of this country are. There are reasons that this should be so, seeing that England had felt the shock and experienced the dire results of attacks by air forces, something we here know not of save from what we have read. Again we are deterred from flying because of fright --- we fear fatalities

“Now it so happens that most of us have seen only that kind of flying which relates to ‘stunts.’ It is this predilection on the part of the boys who have but begun to fly which results in fatalities. They wish to show off for the benefit of the girls who are on the beach and they do one stunt too many. If the flier attends strictly to business he will be in no more danger at any time than he would be were he guiding an automobile --- in fact, he would be in less danger, for the wide expanse of the blue over the top of the earth would be his and there would be no narrow, traffic congested streets and no blind country crossings to be considered.

“Believe in aviation and the future of it,” he said, in concluding his all too brief narration of the NC 4. He prefaced this with the statement that he had been asked whether he would again cross the Atlantic. In response to this query he had said that he thought he would do so when he could take his family with him; which meant that he believed that soon flying across the Atlantic. would be a common occurrence, although it would be the lighter than air rather than the heavier than air machines that would be used Commander Read opines that the dirigibles would be making the trip ere long.

On the following day, the NC 4 left Providence for Southern points, but for hours her commander was in close touch with Providence by use of a wireless phone system. One of the messages received from him was when he was 1,000 feet up in the air over Newport. Another came from him when he was far down the Atlantic coast.

Subsequently Lieutenant Commander Read wrote to President Crooker as follows:

“I wish to thank you heartily on behalf of myself and the other members of the NC 4 crew, for the reception which was accorded to us in Providence, for which the Chamber of Commerce was to a large part responsible.

“I would esteem it a favor if you would convey a similar expression and thanks and appreciation to the other organizations that cooperated with you.”

Secretary H Nelson Street, of the Retail Merchants' Division of the Providence Chamber, of Commerce had charge of the parade feature of the NC 4 reception. He did his work splendidly, as usual The parade was all that could have been asked for.

J Ogden Hoffman, Lieutenant Commander, United States Navy, also wrote to President Crooker as follows:

“As the representative of the United States Navy in Providence, I wish to express my most sincere thanks to yourself and the gentlemen of the Chamber of Commerce, of which you are the honorable President, for the gracious reception tendered Lieutenant Commander Albert C Read, the officers and crew of the NC 4.

“I trust that through you I may be able to express my deepest thanks. It has given me the greatest pleasure to be associated with the gentlemen of your honored organization and I trust that I may have the good fortune of showing my gratitude more substantially than I find it possible to express in words.”