



The FRED KELLY STORY

(PART I)

Fred W. Kelly, receiving a sack of airmail from Harris M. (Pop) Hanshue, Western Airlines' first president. Photo believed taken on April 19, 1926, on Kelly's first scheduled flight. Plane is the Douglas M-2.

by SYDNEY J. ALBRIGHT

All photos by author, Western Airlines



Fred Kelly (extreme left) winning the 100-meter high hurdles at the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm. His time was 15.1 seconds.

Olympic athlete, World War I pilot, barnstormer and pioneer airline aviator. This is Fred W. Kelly, tanned and 77, still looking every inch the athlete he was in Stockholm in 1912. Quiet spoken and gentle, Fred Kelly has always been liked by those who have known him. His warmth and modest manner do not reveal the excitement, the glory, the tragedy and the humor that has been his life.

Fred Warren Kelly has left his name permanently engraved in the record books of Olympic competition and in the pages of history of commercial aviation. He was the first pilot for Western Air Lines, the oldest airline in the United States.

Kelly was born in Beaumont, Calif., on September 12, 1891. His father was a rancher. Fred had four sisters and a brother. He attended El Modena Grammar School, three miles east of Orange, and graduated from Orange High School in 1911.

The following year, Kelly entered the University of Southern California. There he met Dean Cromwell, the great track coach. It didn't take Kelly long to distinguish himself on the field of athletics.

In 1912, the Olympic Games were held in Stockholm and Kelly, a freshman at USC, was chosen to represent the U. S. in the high hurdles. He earned the gold medal, winning the 110-meter event in 15.1 seconds. Cromwell later called Kelly "the greatest athlete I've ever coached."

Upon his return, he received a scholarship to USC from the *Los Angeles Times*.

It was right after the Olympics that two memorable things happened to Fred Kelly, both on the same day. At a track meet in Rheims, France, he raced against the great Jim Thorpe for the first time. It was a handicap race. During the course of the race, an airplane circled over the field. Fred was distracted and looked up. It was the first time he had ever seen a flying machine. He lost his stride and the race. But it changed his life.

"Flying was for me," Kelly said, reminiscing about that eventful day more than 50 years later. "I knew that was what I wanted to do."¹

Kelly and Thorpe raced against each other several times after that, but that was the only time Thorpe ever beat him.

Another thing happened at the 1912 Olympics. Kelly met the great swimmer Duke Kahanamoku, of Hawaii. It was the beginning of a life-long friendship. Every time they saw each other—always on the Mainland—Duke would say, "Fred, when are you going to come see me in the Islands?" Fred always meant to make the trip but never did. Duke died in January 1968.

Looking back at his career as a track star, Kelly remembers an incident which took place at a track meet in Corvallis, Ore. It was his last meet. "I was sitting by the side of the track putting my running shoes on when I heard a scream. Then a thud. A javelin stuck in the ground only three feet away. Any closer and it would have been my last track meet for sure!"

While at USC, Kelly met Corliss C. Moseley, another event which years later was to change Kelly's life. Kelly and Moseley were on the USC football team together.



Receiving a scholarship from the LOS ANGELES TIMES, after winning the Gold Medal.



Kelly and Ralph DeZaldo receiving their gold medals commemorating the first flight between Havana and Santiago, Cuba, 31 Dec. 1920. Photo was taken in Santiago beside a Curtiss Oriole.

In 1916, Fred left USC and the following year joined the Aviation Section of the U. S. Army Signal Corps in San Diego. He was sent to ground school in Berkeley, then went to an army field in New York to await shipment to France for flight training.

There were not enough facilities in France so the Army sent Kelly to Gerstner Field, a new flight training school near Lake Charles, Louisiana. "That's where I got my first flight. It was in a Jenny. After six hours of flying time, I soloed." He earned his aviator's wings just three months after he began training.

From there, Kelly was sent to Dallas, Texas, where he stayed only about three weeks. "They bunked us in a big hangar. I had a .22 rifle in those days and I can remember lying on my bunk and shooting my initials in the rafter."

This was just one of many stunts that Kelly perpetrated. Never one to stand on too much ceremony, Kelly always sought the humorous side of things—often to the consternation of his superiors, but much to the delight of his friends. Many of his pranks became legendary.

"Once again, they were going to send me to France. I was waiting to go, in Hoboken, New Jersey, when they changed my orders and sent me to Taylor Field near Montgomery, Alabama. I had all of 25 hours of flying time so they made me a flight instructor. I stayed there for five months, then in October of 1918, they sent me back to Hoboken to go to France. The next month, however, the war was over and for the third time, I didn't get to go."

Kelly joined a squadron at Mitchell Field, Long Island, and it was while stationed there that he pulled perhaps his most famous prank:

Peace talks were about to begin in Paris and President Woodrow Wilson was to attend the conference. "It was December 7, and I knew he was leaving by ship from Hoboken. A friend of mine and I took a Jenny to go and say goodbye to the President," Kelly relates.

He flew the little plane over the treetops in Central Park, waved to a friend in his apartment on Riverside Drive, then zoomed down the Hudson River. When they

arrived at the President's warship, it was surrounded by tugs. Tall columns of black smoke were curling up from the stacks.

"I decided I wanted to mess that smoke up a little," Kelly said, "so I buzzed over the ship through the smoke. I almost hit the antenna wire between the masts. Then I went over to shake hands with the Statue of Liberty and flew under all the bridges across the East River."

"When we landed back at the field, the officer-of-the-day came running up and said: 'You're confined to the post for two weeks!'"

"I heard indirectly that Mrs. Wilson got scared so they radioed back to 'give this guy the works!' They must have got my number."

Fred may have been confined to post but he could still fly. "It wasn't too bad a punishment."

Shortly thereafter—in January 1919—Kelly was honorably discharged. He stayed in New York and got a job as a boiler salesman. "I sold one boiler; it blew up, so I quit."

Kelly joined the New York Athletic Club and went to work for a company, decorating street lights. During that time, a friend of his—Stu Jolly—a former colleague from flight school, had the idea of going to Cuba to do some barnstorming.

They got some financial backers and went to Montgomery to buy two Jennies. "We put them on a boxcar and shipped them to Key West. There, we put them on a boat for Havana. We then hauled the planes to the airport at Camp Columbia and reassembled them. We took passengers on flights around Havana. We'd charge as much as we could get—sometimes as high as \$50 a flight."

The engine quit on one of his flights and Kelly had to crash-land. It was his first crackup and he broke his arm. Shortly thereafter, the other plane cracked up and that was the end of that barnstorming stint.

A French girl in Havana had a plane and hired Kelly as a mechanic. A little later he met Ralph DeZaldo who offered him a job as a pilot. DeZaldo had a "Hisso" Jenny with a 150 h.p. engine. The plane was wrecked during a hurricane

at Cinfuegos, so DeZaldo sent Kelly back to Montgomery to buy another one.

"While I was there, they had a nice buy on a Curtiss Oriole, so I sent a wire to Ralph telling him what I had and he sent a wire back and said bring it along, too." Kelly crated both planes up, a Jenny and the Oriole, and sent them to Cuba. "I was gettin' pretty familiar with the procedure by then."

Kelly taught DeZaldo how to fly in the Jenny.

One one occasion, Kelly had to make a night landing at Camp Columbia. Clouds had caused it to get dark very suddenly and Fred was trying to find the field. A boy heard the plane overhead and lit a bonfire. He made it down safely; it was the first time he had flown at night.

In the months that followed, Kelly and DeZaldo did a lot of flying. "We'd exhausted the surrounding cities so we decided to go to Santiago, Cuba, in the Oriole. It wasn't a fast trip, we just took it easy, but it turned out to be the first time a plane had flown between Havana and Santiago."

Fred Kelly had made his first mark in aviation history.

News of their arrival spread quickly. Lolita Bacardi (of the famous rum family) and a group of her friends went out to meet the two. Both men were later given gold medals to commemorate the historic flight. Each medal was inscribed with their names and the following notation:

"Recuerdo primer viaje aereo
Habana-Santiago 31 Diciembre
1920"

Kelly added the medal to the Gold Medal he won at the Olympics.

Fred didn't drink. In those days the law said you weren't supposed to, but Fred knew his friends liked a "shot" now and again. Prohibition, of course, made liquor hard to get.

He returned to the United States in 1921. Augustine Parla, the man who was publicizing Kelly's barnstorming flights, used to enjoy slipping a little rum past Customs now and again. Fred bought a suitcase full from him in Key West.

Arriving at his hotel in New York, Kelly recalls how surprised the bellhops were at the weight of the suitcase. Eventually, he got it to California where he gave it all away to friends, never touching a drop himself.

That year, he married Marie McDonald of Los Angeles, and their first daughter, Patricia Marie, was born. A second daughter, Nancy Warren, was born in 1926, and their only son, Fred Jr., in 1934.

Kelly worked a while on his father's barley ranch at El Toro, Calif., then in 1923, he became Dean Cromwell's assistant at USC, and coached for a year.

In 1924, Fred was in charge of sales receipts for the Los Angeles trials for the 7th Olympiad, held at Antwerp, Belgium.

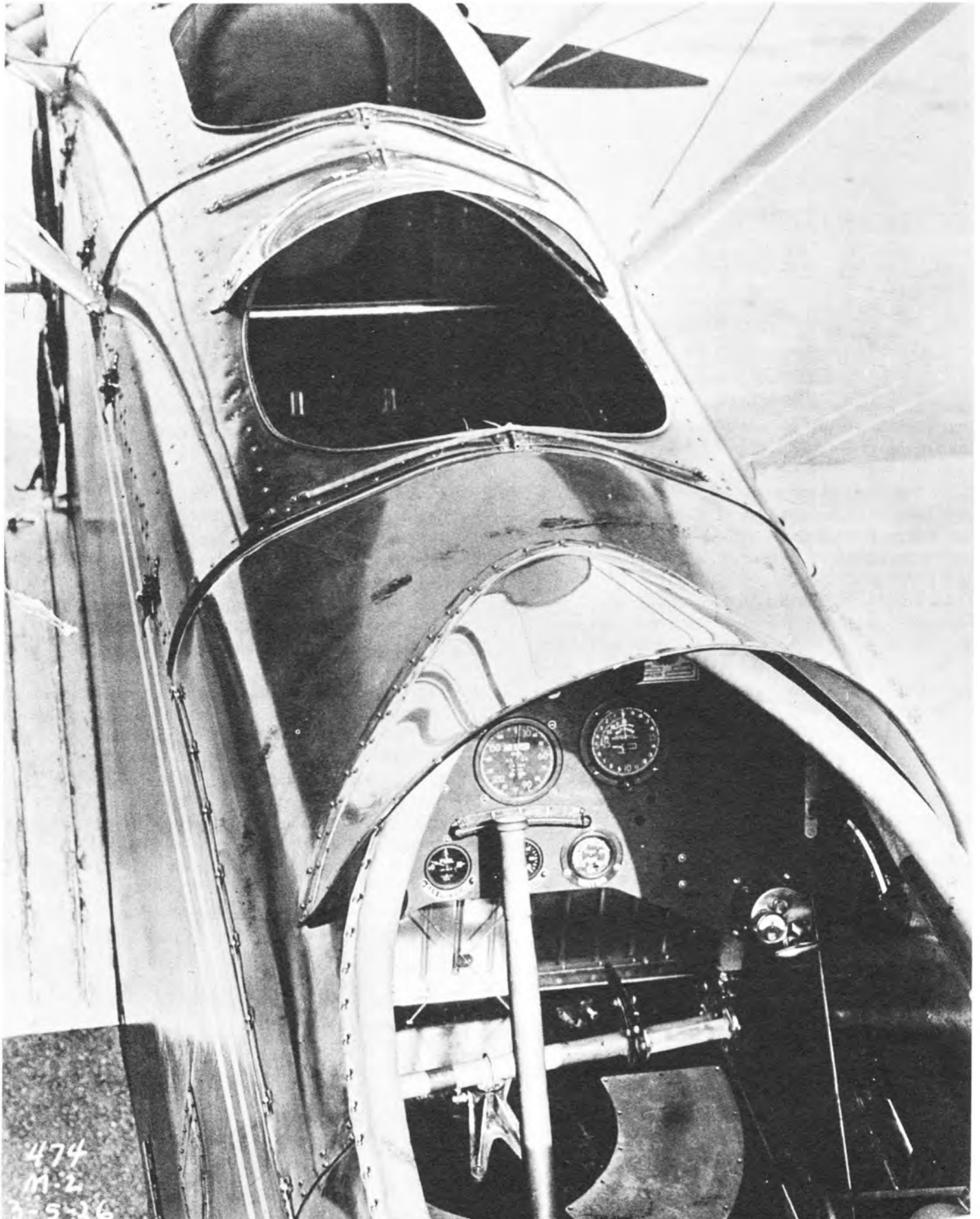
After the Olympics, Kelly joined the Weber Showcase Company. That was in 1925, the year he was again to cross paths with Corliss C. Moseley—by then, Major Moseley, commander of a national guard squadron in Los Angeles. Fred joined Moseley's unit.

On February 2, Congress had passed the Kelly Act,³ or First Air Mail Act. This empowered the Postmaster General to transfer the carrying of airmail to private contractors.



Western's first fleet—six Douglas M-2s—at Vail Field, probably in March or April 1926. Only Maj. Corliss C. Moseley's

plane had Western Air Express markings (second from left) at this date. There was still no sign on the hangar.



The Douglas M-2 with forward cockpits modified to carry passengers. When only mail was carried, an enclosed hatch

was used. The front passenger faced to the rear, an arrangement later changed. Photograph dated 5 March 1926.



*Western's first hangar at Vail Field
– Charles Ray's converted movie
studio in 1926.*

The government began flying the mail in 1918 and in 1920 began transcontinental air mail service from New York to San Francisco.

In Los Angeles, a group of civic-minded men wanted an airline which would serve their community. Among them were Harry Chandler, publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*, and William May Garland, a wealthy real estate man, who later became president of the organizing committee of the 10th Olympiad.

On July 13, 1925, articles of incorporation were filed in Sacramento under the name of "Western Air Express." Two days later, the Postmaster General advertised for bids on eight routes, including the one between Los Angeles and Salt Lake City via Las Vegas.

On November 7, Western was awarded the mail contract over the route.

The infant airline needed money. Moseley took a year's leave from the Guard to help organize Western Air. "Mose,"—as he was called—Ed Gott, then president of Boeing, and Bill Henry, now the *Los Angeles Times* syndicated columnist, approached Byron L. Graves, Southern California distributor for the Ford Co., for financial help.



Left: The "Four Horseman of Western Air Express" with Maj. Moseley, Vice-Pres. of Operations. (L. to r.): Kelly, C. N. "Jimmy" James, Alva R. DeGarmo, Maurice F. Graham, and Moseley, Right: Kelly among a group of

Graves said that Henry Ford was developing the single-engine Stout all-metal airplane and was looking for future buyers. Moseley told Graves that if he would provide the money to get Western started, the company would order seven planes.

Graves agreed. Eventually \$360,000 was raised, mostly from Ford dealers in Southern California. While this was going on, Kelly didn't know what an important role he was to play in the matter some months hence.

Moseley made one stipulation with Graves which turned out to be a wise move: he would have to approve the Ford-Stout plane before buying it. Graves agreed to this.

Moseley had been a test pilot for the Air Service at Dayton, Ohio, and knew that Stout-designed planes did not enjoy a good reputation with the military. Moseley said the Air Service looked upon Stout's designs as "impractical."

While he had misgivings about the Ford-Stout plane, Moseley worried that he would run into trouble with Graves and the other financial backers if he didn't buy the plane. He had to give the plane every chance to prove itself before making a final decision.

Moseley was vice president of operations for Western; he was the technician. Harris M. (Pop) Hanshue, who had



Western's first employees, at Vail Field, probably in April or May 1926. Holding Kelly is DeGarmo, next is Moseley. Kneeling in center is Everitt Drinkwater, Western's first superintendent of maintenance. Others unidentified.



Ready for the long trek: Western's first pilots pose before leaving Vail Field for Salt Lake City, to lay emergency markers along the flight route. From left they are: Kelly, Eldrid R. Remelin (reserve pilot), Maj. Moseley (who was also a pilot), Jimmy James (in cab), Maury Graham and Al DeGarmo.

made a name for himself years earlier as a race driver, was president and general manager; he was the businessman. But Moseley had to pick the plane.

Mose contacted his old friend, Fred Kelly, and asked him to join the company as a pilot. He tracked Fred down by calling his wife, Marie, and found him in Chicago supervising the installation of a Weber glass grinding machine. Kelly accepted the job and on December 1, 1925, became Western's first pilot.

Moseley immediately sent him to Detroit. "I was suspicious of the airplane and sent Fred Kelly back there to observe it and to report daily everything he could learn about the airplane."⁵

Moseley had checked Kelly out in the Liberty-powered DH-4s used by the Guard. The Ford-Stout also used the Liberty.

Fred stayed there for several months and was actually put on the Ford payroll by Graves, earning \$5 a day. Why he was put on the Ford payroll while also being employed by Western isn't clear. At the time, Kelly needed the money and Graves may have been helping him out. Ford had a lot of money invested in the plane and in Western and needed the plane order from Western.

Whatever happened, Kelly worked on the plane, talked with the test pilots—especially Larry Fritz⁶—and flew in it. But he was never the pilot. He doesn't recall why he didn't fly the plane. It would seem the natural thing to do.

Kelly and Fritz became close friends. "You don't want that plane, it'll never get over the Rockies," Fritz confided. Kelly agreed and turned thumbs down. He wrote Moseley and told him.

"Fred's reports on the Stout plane were even worse than than I had anticipated," Moseley said. "Fortunately, the Air Corps called me to a conference on the National Guard at Dayton, Ohio, so I ordered Fred home and flew to Dayton in my DH-4. I obtained permission there to fly to Detroit where I tested the airplane, and it was so lacking in performance, construction, etc., it was actually pitiful."⁷

The plane needed nearly a mile for takeoff at close to sea level. Clearly, the plane wasn't suited for Western's route to Salt Lake City. Moseley agreed with Kelly and rejected the Ford-Stout.

"At this point, I figured if I called or wired Graves that the airplane was unfit, this would be the end of our proposed airline,"⁸ Moseley said. So he contacted George Holley of the Holly Carburetor Co. Holly put \$10,000 into Western Air and had convinced 10 others to do likewise.

Holley made carburetors for Ford. "I frankly told Mr. Holley that the airplane was no good; it couldn't possibly operate from the altitude at Salt Lake City with a load and that it was dangerous and impractical.

"I told him that if we bought it, disaster would ensue in the loss of life, stockholders' money and failure to perform for the U. S. Post Office."⁹

Naturally, Holley was upset at the news but agreed with Moseley and Kelly. He sent a telegram, written by Moseley, to Hanshue and Graves, supporting the rejection of the Ford-Stout.

"I fully expected to get a wire terminating my services," Moseley said, "but was agreeably surprised to receive a wire to proceed in choosing a proper airplane."¹⁰



Remelin and DeGarmo laying out the landing "T," somewhere on the desert along the route from Los Angeles to Salt Lake City, February 1926. The canvas markers indicated emergency strips approximately every 20 miles.



Refueling at Las Vegas on the familiarization flight by Western's pilots in April 1926.

The final chapter in the single-engine Ford-Stout story was written shortly after the plane was rejected by Western: The factory burned to the ground. "Everything was destroyed," Kelly said. "The fire happened even though there were guards posted around it . . ."

The plane they finally settled on was the Douglas M-2 biplane. Moseley had test-flown its predecessor, the Douglas XO-2 at Dayton. He asked that modifications be made before Western would buy it. A nose radiator for the Liberty engine was installed instead of the belly radiator; and steel-backed bearings gave the engine 50 more hours of flying time between overhauls.¹¹

The M-2s hadn't been delivered yet when Kelly got back to Los Angeles, but preparations for inauguration of service were well underway. He was joined by three other pilots Moseley hired out of his National Guard squadron: Charles N. (Jimmy) James, Alva R. DeGarmo and Maurice F. Graham.¹² These first four pilots were later known as "The Four Horsemen."

The first thing they did, was to survey the route from Los Angeles to Las Vegas and Salt Lake City. They made survey flights as far as Las Vegas, flying DH-4s and Jennies borrowed from the Guard. "We didn't fly all the way to Salt Lake," Kelly said, "because we didn't want to abuse the use of the Guard planes. Mose was a pretty conscientious guy."

In February 1926, the Four Horsemen and Eldrid L. Remelin,¹³ who joined the company as a reserve pilot, loaded up two Dodge trucks and DeGarmo's 1924 Studebaker and headed east. Their job was to scout emergency landing strips along the route and lay out canvas landing markers. The trip took about a week.

Kelly didn't start out with the rest, but joined them in Las Vegas under rather spectacular circumstances. Fred flew in on a DH-4 with a Capt. Harold. Here's how DeGarmo remembers the incident:

"I'll never forget when Capt. Harold and Fred came over the little ol' town of Las Vegas—that was 42 or 43 years ago. A freight train was switching and the engineer was paying more attention to the DH up there than his train. Some of us were in the Harvey House for coffee and BANG!—the engine ran into a boxcar and knocked it off the rails on its side."¹⁴

The rest of the trip took them across long stretches of desolate desert and through rugged mountain country. It was an area that they were to come to know better than their own backyards. It was also where Maury Graham was to lose his life.

"Arrangements were made with ranchers, railroad clerks and others to phone in weather information. The Union Pacific Railroad cooperatively offered the use of its phone boxes along the track . . .

"When the course was laid, it was little more than an air highway superimposed upon Union Pacific's long snaking tracks. The gleam of the rails were the early-day radio beams that guided the flyers over the varied terrain. In bad weather, the pilots even made it a strict rule to follow the right-hand side of the track bed to avoid collisions with the opposite bound mail plane."¹⁵

In Los Angeles, Western set up a hangar which was Charles Ray's old movie studio and laid out a landing strip in what is now the City of Commerce. It was called Vail Field.

Kelly and Graham were based in Los Angeles, while James and DeGarmo were based in Salt Lake City. The six M-2s were delivered, painted red and silver. Each had the name of a pilot on the side of the cockpit. Kelly's plane was No. 5.¹⁶

Eric Springer, test pilot for Douglas Aircraft, delivered the planes to Vail Field from the Douglas plant in Santa Monica.¹⁷

Kelly and the others flew about 25 to 30 hours each before scheduled operations began. All six planes were flown to Salt Lake City on a familiarization flight. James, DeGarmo and Remelin stayed in Salt Lake; the others returned to Los Angeles.

A toss of the coin decided who would have the honor of the first flight. Kelly and Graham tossed for the first east-bound flight. Graham won. James won the first westbound flight.

On April 17, 1926, all was ready for the first flight. It was overcast and a somewhat chilly Saturday morning, but there was excitement and enthusiasm in the air. A big crowd had gathered around the three biplanes lined up at Vail. Actress Claire Windsor was there to add glamor to the occasion.

Both Kelly and Graham were all suited up. In case Graham's plane had any problems and couldn't take off, Kelly would fly the first flight in his plane.

Pop Hanshue and Los Angeles Postmaster P. P. O'Brien supervised the loading of 256 pounds of airmail. Cameras clicked and whirled and reporters busily scribbled down notes. At last, Los Angeles was to get transcontinental air-mail service.

Graham did make it, as did Jimmy James who took off a little later that morning from Salt Lake City for Los Angeles. The flight was one day up; the next day back. That meant that Kelly didn't make his first flight until the third day—April 19.

Moseley told the pilots to cruise the M-2 around 90 m.p.h., though they could go much faster. He reasoned that by keeping the speed down, the engines would last longer. The first flights were scheduled for eight hours and 20 minutes.

"That was too slow," Kelly recalls. "We began speeding the flights up a bit—to about 115 m.p.h.—and it didn't seem to hurt the motors a bit. So we cut the flying time to about six and one-half hours."

Keeping a tight schedule wasn't too important in those days. Even if a flight were late, it was still a lot faster than the railroad. And flying was pretty informal compared to today's airline operation.

On one occasion, Kelly and another pilot were on a flight and spotted a shepherd with his flock in a field near Milford, Utah. "I could see his stove burning and I knew these guys were famous for their sourdough biscuits," Kelly said, "so we just set down in the field and had lunch with him."

Another time, near Lund, Utah, Fred saw some people below running and waving their arms. "I thought something was the matter so I circled around and landed. They all rushed up and I asked what was happening. They said they were just waving to me!" Airplanes were still a novelty.

Bebe Daniels, a popular movie actress of the time, often flew Western. Fred was her pilot on one particular flight, when he saw Jimmy James heading in the opposite direction. Fred knew that Jimmy always wanted to meet Bebe, so when the two planes crossed, Fred signaled Jimmy to land.

They did, and there out in the desert, Fred introduced Bebe Daniels to Jimmy. They chatted for about half an hour, got back into their planes and were on their way in opposite directions. Both arrived at their respective destinations a half-hour late; both reported *headwinds*!

Flying was hazardous in those days, but in the first year of operation, Western only had 13 forced landings due to mechanical problems. Weather was a bigger prob-



Lindbergh and his "Spirit of St. Louis" drew a crowd to Vail Field in 1927.



Fred W. Kelly today (June 1968) with another Olympic Gold Medal winner, Bob Mathias, Congressman from California and Arthur F. Kelly, (no relation), Senior Vice

President-Sales. They are showing how the Olympic Games symbol would look on the side of a Western Airlines jet. Western will carry the U. S. Olympic team to the Games in Mexico City in October.

lem, accounting for the rest.

"We couldn't get any medals for forced landings; the mechanics were too good," Kelly said. Everitt Drinkwater, Western's first superintendent of maintenance, had pulled together the finest crew of mechanics in the West.

"I had a forced landing near Eureka, Utah," Kelly said. "It was about a half-mile from the railroad phone box. I called Jimmy James in Salt Lake. He and Jimmy King, a mechanic, flew another plane down to meet me. We loaded the mail in Jimmy's plane and I took off for Salt Lake. King was such a good mechanic that he had that plane fixed so fast, they arrived in Salt Lake before I had left the field for town."

While mail loads were building up, few passengers were ready to brave the elements aboard the open-cockpit planes, surrounded by little more than canvas and bailing wire. But Charles Lindbergh gave aviation a shot in the arm.

After his spectacular solo flight across the Atlantic in 1927, Lindbergh barnstormed the country under the auspices of the Guggenheim Foundation for the promotion of aeronautics, telling the nation about aviation.

He flew into Vail Field and was met by a huge crowd. Western's mechanics looked after the "Spirit of St. Louis." He also visited Salt Lake City. Kelly was on a flight when Lindy was in Los Angeles, but flew to Salt Lake while Lindbergh was there and compared notes.

Fred took a young lad from Las Vegas with him—Ted Homan. Teddy loved airplanes and was always hanging around the airport. Fred thought it would be a big thrill for Ted to meet Lindbergh. It was. Today, Homan is one of Western's senior captains.

Another big aviation booster was Will Rogers, who ironically lost his life in a plane crash near Pt. Barrow, Alaska. His support for aviation was all the more remarka-

ble in that he had more than one close call in an airplane. One of those was with Fred Kelly.

Jack Northrop and Gerry Vultee had developed a new plane called the "Lockheed Air Express." It was a cigar-shaped monoplane with a parasol wing. The pilot sat in an open cockpit, while the passengers sat inside a cabin.¹⁸

Alan Lockheed wanted Western to buy the plane; it would encourage other airlines to do likewise. One Air Express¹⁹ was painted in Western's livery and loaned for a trial flight.

Fred Kelly was to fly the plane to Salt Lake City. He had two passengers. One of them was Will Rogers.²⁰ On June 6, 1928, they took off from Los Angeles. Rogers was on his way to the Republican National Convention in Kansas City.

"It was 110 degrees in Las Vegas that morning," Kelly recalls. "There was a concrete 'T' in the center of the landing strip to show the direction to land. The wind had blown the sand away and left the T exposed about three inches.

"When I came in for a landing, I had pretty good speed. I hit the T with the right wheel and broke the aluminum casting. The axle hit the ground and flipped the plane over. On the way over, I thought it would hang, then fall back, but it didn't. It fell gently over on its back. The tail kept my head about two feet off the ground.

"'Are you all right, Kelly?' Will yelled. We were hooked in our safety belts. Will was hanging upside down. The door handle caught his parachute harness. When Tommy Thompson opened the door, it released his harness. Will fell on his head and yelled 'Goddam!'"

Fortunately, no one was injured.

That wasn't the end of the incident, however. Another plane—an M-2—was flown up from Los Angeles. Will boarded and Fred flew him to Salt Lake City. There, the famous humorist climbed aboard a Boeing Air Transport plane for the rest of the flight to Chicago. While landing in Omaha, almost the same thing happened and Will Rogers chalked up his second plane accident in a single day.

"It wouldn't have happened if I'd been going to the Democratic Convention!" Rogers wrote later in his syndicated column.²¹ (To be continued.)

FOOTNOTES:

1. Direct quotes by Kelly have been taken from personal interviews recorded by the author over the past four years.

2. The flight medal is now in the Western Air Lines Museum, and the Olympic Gold Medal is in Helms Athletic Foundation, both in Los Angeles.

3. The name of the Act is a coincidence; it is not connected to Fred Kelly.

4. Eric Springer, first test pilot for Douglas Aircraft Co., agrees. He too thought the Stout design "impractical."

5. Letter from Moseley, dated July 31, 1968. Moseley lives in Beverly Hills, California.

6. Fritz lives in Saratoga, California.

7. Moseley, *op. cit.*

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*

12. James died in Glendale, Calif., January 11, 1964. DeGarmo lives in Florence, Oregon. Graham died following a plane crash near Cedar City, Utah, 1930.

13. Remelin lives in Laguna Hills, California. He is a retired United Air Lines captain.

14. Letter from DeGarmo, dated July 25, 1968.

15. Hereford, Jack and Peggy, *The Flying Years*, Los Angeles, Western Air Lines, 1946, p. 13.

16. Registration number C1490.

17. Springer lives in West Los Angeles, California.

18. Scott, Denham, "The Air Express Model," *Southern California Industrial News*, July 22, 1968, p. 4.

19. Registration number 4897.

20. The other passenger was Dr. L. D. Cheyney.

21. *The Salt Lake Tribune*, June 7, 1928, p. 1.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Sydney J. Albright is information bureau manager for Western Air Lines, Los Angeles. He is editor of the quarterly *Shareholders Report* and for five years edited *Flight Times*, the airline's employee publication. He is also responsible for Western's public tour program and the development of the company museum.

Prior to joining Western in 1962, Albright was a news-writer at KABC Radio and KPFK-FM in Los Angeles. After receiving his master's degree in journalism at UCLA, he joined the faculty of the Department of Journalism, taught news communications at the graduate level, and earned a B.A. degree in political science.

Albright served as a pilot in the U. S. Air Force, flying both transports and jets, mostly in Japan and Korea. Born in Yokohama, Japan, Albright received his secondary education in the Far East and Australia.

NEXT ISSUE OF THE *JOURNAL*: "The Fred Kelly Story" Part II, including "The Saga of Maury Graham."