

"K" OF NEW HAVEN" - FINALE

by

Gregory C. Kohn

Editor's Note: The story of the special Stinson monoplane, c/n X-10, NR-9696, first called the "SALLY SOVEREIGN" and then "K of New Haven" previously appeared in the Journal in articles by Greg Kohn. See Vol. 1, No. 3, P. 104 and Vol. 3, No. 1, P. 50. The finale story of this series is told in the following chapter on this plane.

After the termination of the May 31, 1930 attempt to fly the Stinson monoplane, "K of New Haven" nonstop from New Haven, Connecticut to Buenos Aires, Argentina, the entire organization behind the flight was reviewed by the sponsors of the attempt. New plans were formulated and a new flight crew was chosen to complete the flight under the sponsorship of the Kolynos Toothpaste Company of New Haven, Connecticut for which the plane was named. The new crew consisted of Randall Enslow, Chief pilot and radio operator, and relief pilots James Garrigan and Garland Peed. Peed was the only one of the previous crew to stay with the expedition.

The flight to Argentina would follow a course from New Haven to Havana, Cuba for the first refueling contact. The "K", as the plane was referred to, would then head for Panama, across the Caribbean Sea, where another refueling plane was scheduled to meet them. Then would come the longest hop of the journey, a 1700 mile flight to Lima, Peru. After refueling over Lima they were to climb up over the Andes Mountains and head across Argentina to Mendoza, Argentina for the last refueling contact, and then head for Buenos Aires, their goal. A total of 8,000 miles were to be flown and the crew expected to make it in a record time of $4\frac{1}{2}$ days to break the existing record of $5\frac{1}{2}$ days set during February and March of that year by Lts. White and McMullen in the "Stanavo" Lockheed Vega c/n 118 - NC-106N.

On the afternoon of July 15, 1930, the "K of New Haven" took off with 250 gallons of gasoline on board using almost the entire runway of Roosevelt Field to become airborne. The first refueling contact took place over Valley Stream, Long Island. 300 gallons of gasoline were transferred in three separate refueling contacts. This fuel was stored in the 650 gallon cabin fuel tanks. It was now 8:15 P.M. and enough fuel was on board to carry them to the second refueling point, 20 hours away at Havana, Cuba.

The last refueling contact was made out to sea off Rockaway Point, New Jersey at an altitude of 3,000 ft. by R. W. Mackie, Operations Officer of Curtiss Field in Valley Stream. Mackie was flying a Curtiss Robin and had just completed the last contact when the engine of the Robin spluttered and died. He had to land the ship, out of gas, dead stick, in the approaching darkness and barely made the beach.

The "K" proceeded southward running into fog and low visibility along the eastern seaboard which forced the fliers to turn inland in search of better weather conditions. This did not materialize and they soon became lost. After flying aimlessly in the fog and darkness for 8 hours the engine finally quit when the last drop of fuel drained from the huge fuel tanks. Unable to orientate themselves with a now unstable aircraft, the "K" suddenly stalled and went out of control. The crew decided that it was time to leave if they wanted to live and tell about it so, they promptly went over the side with their parachutes. Seconds later, a resounding crash indicated that the "K of New Haven" would fly no more.

Once on the ground they checked their position and found that they had landed about a mile from Bostwick, 15 miles from Monroe, Georgia. The plane had plowed into the ground about a half mile away and was demolished. They had traveled only 800 miles of the proposed 8,000 mile trip. Randy Enslow, the pilot, suffered a dislocated shoulder in getting out of the plane. Feed and Garrigan were shaken but uninjured.

The Stinson monoplane built to regain for the United States the International non-refueling endurance record under the name "Sally Sovereign" had failed to accomplish its intended purpose. Now, after being rebuilt to set a new long distance record flight under the name "K of New Haven" it failed again, not once, but twice, and met final destruction. So came the end of another airplane and a valiant attempt to gain fleeting fame in the air in one of the most romantic eras of aviation.

References: (1) Letter from the Whitehall Pharmacal Company, present owner
of the Kolynos Toothpaste Company.
(2) New York Times: July 16 and 17, 1930.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gregory Kohn has kept up a running correspondence through these pages ever since joining the Society as member No. 45. His introduction, on Page 58, Vol. 1, No. 2, needs little change except for the addition of another daughter, and that his manuscript on the MacRobertson Air Race is now at the publishers, scheduled to come out this year. Other major contributions to the Journal include "The K.L.M. Douglas DC-2 Fleet" (Vol. 2, No. 2), "A Challenge Accepted" (Vol. 3, No. 1), the "Century of Progress Story" (Vol. 3, No. 3), and "The Story of Lockheed Vega NR-496M" (Vol. 3, No. 4). He still resides at 3944 N. 67th St., Milwaukee 16, and is a safety engineer for Schlitz.

LEE ENICH'S PHOTO COLLECTION

One of the main criticisms of the 616 aircraft photographers is that they never print their negatives. A notable exception is Lee Enich of Van Nuys, California, who has compiled some 3,000 prints in large albums. In a further departure from the "negative only" type of collector, Lee has fabricated a number of knock-down aluminum racks to hold the pages of the albums. This set-up is probably the only one of its kind in the country and enables a large number of people to view the photographs.

The display stretches 75 feet in length and is six feet high. It has been a feature at numerous aviation functions in the Los Angeles area and has been seen by thousands of people. At the OX-5 Club national convention it was the gathering place for the members to meet and reminisce about the "good old days".

Lee's albums contain photographs of military and commercial aircraft, both domestic and foreign, as well as a number of close-ups of pilot personalities. His negative collection is, of course, much larger than the 3,000 prints in the display. Every serious aircraft photographer shoots every conceivable view, "just in case", and Lee is no exception. He is also a firm believer in quality rather than quantity and his pictures give authority to this point, both in composition and processing.

Always ready to share his collection with any interested group, Lee's slogan is "Have display, will travel". A photo of the display appears on page 40.