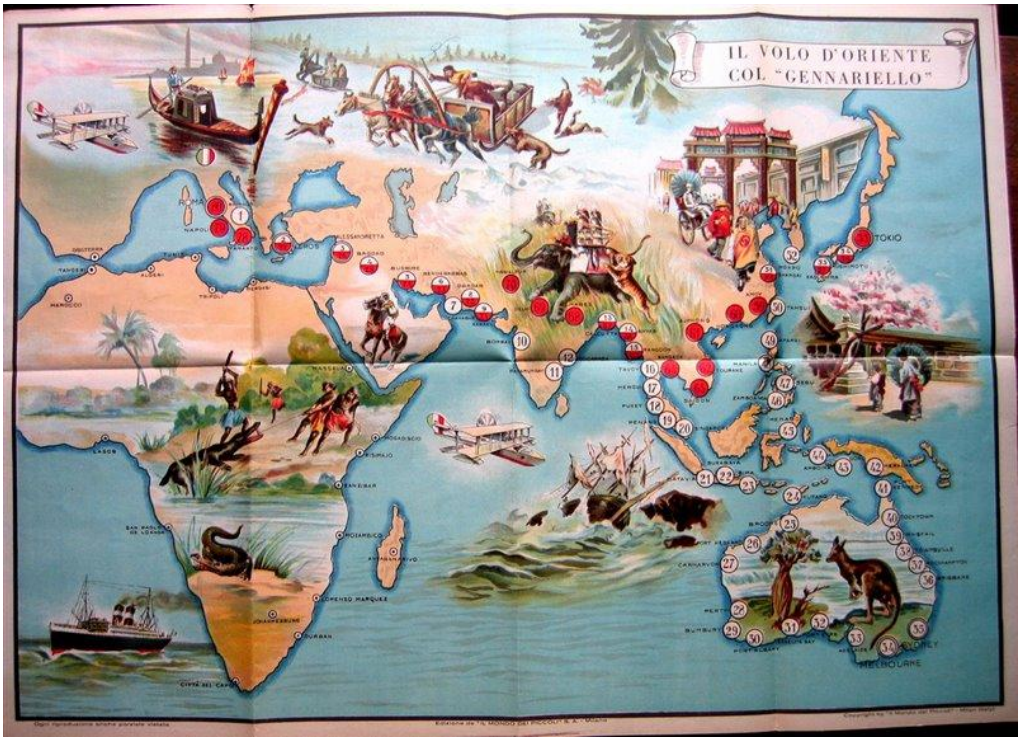
Francesco de Pinedo:

Information collected by Tom Lockley to mark the hundredth anniversary of the flight of Francesco de Pinedo and Ernesto Campanelli from Rome to Melbourne, Tokyo and return to Rome, April-November 1925. It is based around a computer translation of Francisco's 1926 book *Un Volo di 55.000 Chilometri*.



Souvenir poster of the Australian flight – provenance unknown

This was only the third flight from Europe to Australia.
It was the first return flight from Europe to Australia,
the first flight from Australia to Japan and the first flight to Australia by a seaplane.

Marchese (Marquis) Francesco de Pinedo, 1890-1933

About this book

Australian aviation historians have all heard of Francesco de Pinedo: all of us have seen pictures of his aircraft, and we know that he flew around Australia in 1925.

When I started researching him for my monthly article in the AHSA NSW newsletter, I expected to take only a few days to complete his story. But I quickly found out enough to make me realise that this is an amazing story, and also that there was little information about his 1925 flight available in English. I did find that there was a specific book on the subject, written by Francesco himself: *Un Volo di 55.000 Chilometri,* but there was no English version. I found that Microsoft Office had a translation facility, and after a few hundred hours of editing, the machine translation developed into what should be a reasonable English version.

But it only told part of the story, so I plagiarised other information to make a reasonably complete story of this remarkable airman, concentrating on his time in Australia. If the information comes from *55,000 Kilometres*, the source is not acknowledged; otherwise the source is either acknowledged or obvious.

To get an idea of the status of the writing, see the comments overleaf.

Please send any corrections, comments and additional information to tomlockley@gmail.com .

Publication note:

The basis of this book is UN VOLO DI 55.000 CHILOMETRI, by Francesco de Pinedo, published in 1926. Other material has been added - usually plagiarised - to make a more complete picture of the career of this remarkable airman, but the main emphasis remains on the Melbourne / Tokyo and return flight of 1925.

Please note:

The basic translation was made by Microsoft Word. I then went through and roughly tidied it up. It was impossible to get a clear PDF copy, and that meant that the copy that was made by the conversion program had some errors.

Apart from this, there is an overuse of the present tense in some places, and Italian speakers tell me that this is because English does not have a tense that exactly matches this Italian usage. Sometimes I have changed it verbs past tense, but usually not.

I think that my alterations have generally been reasonably accurate, but there are no guarantees. Corrections are welcome, especially if they are significant!

Maps are included on pages 14, 34,73, 119 and on page 158. The main map from which these were extracted was produced in about 1926. Many place names have different spellings, and some are completely different. This will gradually be rationalised, but it will be a long process.

An important point: during descriptions of take-off, Francesco often refers to the 'redan', a term that does not translate. It must mean the stage of takeoff that is known in English as 'on the step'. When a seaplane takes off, it builds speed gradually, and can only get fast enough to take off when it is skimming on the surface of the water, "on the step", not ploughing through the water. Francesco describes 90° turns at high speed in bad weather in several of his take-offs, which indicates considerable skill, a very seaworthy flying boat, and even some luck – or, as Francesco would prefer to think, divine protection.

Ernesto Campanelli, his companion on the flight who was indispensable to its success, is referred to as 'engineer' and several other titles. I have substituted 'Ernesto' for all these, except when he is just called "Campanelli'.

The subheadings are mine, not Francesco's.

Printed on request in single copies – or the .pdf file is freely available,

Tom Lockley, May 2025

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(* before an entry indicates that the text is a translation of UN VOLO DI 55.000 CHILOMETRI)

De Pinedo: the early story

(Prepared by Tom Lockley from multiple basic sources)

From September 1911 to mid-October 1912 the Kingdom of Italy waged war with the declining Turkish Ottoman Empire. As a result, Tripolitania and Cyrenaica (basically modern Libya) became Italian colonies.

In this war we see the first use of aircraft in combat. On October 23, 1911, Italian pilot Capitano Carlo Piazza flew over Turkish lines in the first aerial reconnaissance mission. On November 1, 1911, Italian Lieutenant Giulio Gavotti dropped the first aerial bombs on Turkish troops in Libya. French Blériot aircraft were the mainstay of the Italian air effort: Australia has its own famous Blériot, bought to Australia by the French aviator Maurice Guillaux in 1914.

The aerial campaign of the Italo-Turkish war certainly aroused a lot of interest, and by the outbreak of World War I, most combatants had military aircraft, and the use of aircraft developed quickly during the war.

This made a strong impression on Francesco de Pinedo. He was born in 1899; his family were upper class, and he had a wide education including literature and the arts, especially music. At age 18 he joined the Italian navy, and by 1922 was a commissioned officer. He served in the war with Turkey in 191112, witnessing the first use of aircraft in combat. The experience sparked his interest in aviation.

Italy entered World War I, supporting the French / British/ Russian alliance against Germany, Austria and Turkey. After service in the navy, Francesco entered flight school at Taranto in July 1917. He completed aviation training in only 45 days, and qualified as a pilot in two months. He spent most of the rest of the war flying reconnaissance

missions for the *Regia Marina*. He finished the war as commander of the seaplane base at Brindisi, where five seaplane squadrons were based.[1]

After the war ended in November 1918, Pinedo returned briefly to sea duty, but soon resumed aviation duties. In the immediate postwar years he made milestone flights from Italy to the Netherlands and from Brindisi to Constantinople in the Ottoman Empire. On 16 October 1923 he transferred from the *Regia Marina* to the *Regia Aeronautica* (Italy's Royal Air Force) which had been established that year as an independent service. He entered the new service with a rank of *tenente colonnello* (lieutenant colonel) and because of his technical and organisational skills was given senior positions as its chief staff officer and the vice commandant of one of its air squadrons despite being only in his early 30s.

> *Civilisation is built on water. The world's principal cities are mirrored by seas, rivers, or lakes. Why not utilize these immense, ready to use, natural air strips in place of costly airports?*

To prove his ideas, he undertook a flight from Rome to Australia, and Japan and return.

He chose as his aircraft a Savoia SIAI S.16*ter* , carrying Ernesto Campanelli as mechanic. Ernesto was a long-time friend and associate in the Regio Aeronautica.

At the time the RAAF in Australia mainly flew Fairey IIID seaplanes, in one of which RAAF pilots Goble and Mcintyre made the first flight around Australia in 2024. The Savoia was clearly superior: it was lighter, and faster, with a more powerful, more reliable engine. Most importantly, its sturdy hull was far stronger than the fragile large floats of the Faireys.

The Supermarine Seagulls that were just beginning to be used in Australia were much stronger than the Faireys and lasted in RAAF service until the 1859s.

The pioneering flight to Tokyo: Arturo Ferrarin, 1920[1]

On May 31 1920, Arturo Ferrarin and Guido Masiero arrived at Tokyo in two Ansaldo SVA 9 biplanes after a gruelling 106-day journey from Rome. They were met by crowds reported to be as large as 200,000 people. Ferrarin was subsequently invested as a samurai, Japan's highest honour.

The Italian government allocated 20 million lire, an enormous amount at that time, for the project.

The journey was a great "curtain raiser" for Francesco de Pinedo's 1925 journey to Australia and Japan, and the knowledge gained of the Asian stages was of great assistance to him.

Biplanes prepare for the Rome-Tokyo flight in February 1920 (Image: Ranza Gordesco)

The pilots had left Centocelle airfield, Rome on February 14, 1920. They were part of a company of 11 aircraft and airmen, all intent on impressing the world by flying the 18,000km (11,120 miles) journey to East Asia for the first time.

The original flight consisted of nine aircraft, five Ansaldo SVA reconnaissance-fighters and four Caproni bombers. Ferrarin and Masiero, flying Ansaldos, were late additions, bringing the total to 11 aircraft.

This was rather lucky, because the original nine encountered breakdowns and accidents, one of them fatal. The late-added Ansaldos were the only two to complete the journey. In fact, Ferrarin's aircraft alone made the entire trek by air; Masiero's was replaced in China and depended upon rail and ship at two points.

The biplanes were not designed for use in high tropical temperatures and humidity and had no radio or airspeed indicators. Navigation required only a watch and compass, while technical issues forced the engineers on board to continuously carry out repairs. The journey was also expensive logistically, with multiple stopovers, supplies and spares required, including four additional SVAs placed throughout the route.

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[1] This section is almost entirely plagiarised from the work of Dennis Simanaitis, (with his kind permission) as recorded at https://simanaitissays.com/2015/02/22/flying-rome-to-tokyo-in-1920-2/

Both Japan and Italy were on the 'winning' side of World War I, and were keen to develop their aviation industry. Japan had acquired several island territories in the Pacific as League of Nations mandates, and were developing these as potential places for further expansion. The Italian poet and airman Gabriele d'Annunzio was the prime mover for this project. He certainly was an original thinker: during the war he had bombed Vienna with leaflets of his poetry! Japanese high culture was in vogue among European, especially Italian, elites.

Ferranin's aircraft was preserved in Japan: see page 168.

Even Ferranin had a hair-raising trip. When they reached Baghdad his aircraft malfunctioned and he had to land on a Baghdad football pitch in the midst of a match. On the way to British-controlled Karachi, his Ansaldo was forced down again, this time in a village occupied by anti-British rebels. Fortunately, the rebels mistook the Italian *tricolore* for the flag of Bulgaria, a country with which they were not unfriendly.

Rangoon, Burma, was the last bit of British control. From there, they visited Hanoi, Macao, Foochow, Shanghai and, as it was known during their visit, Tsingtau. Now known as Qingdao, it is famous as the source of Tsingtao beer. It was a German colony from 1891 to 1914 and had been seized by the Japanese early in the war in a military operation that involved the first use of seaplanes to attack enemy targets. The Italian aviators on their Rome-Tokyo flight made a long repair stop at Tsingtau and held aerial high jinks over the beach and bay every day. An amazing video of Ferrarin's life shows several of these entertainments, some of them from cockpit view, and it can be seen at http://goo.gl/0ZQRdB.

The flight provided a great deal of information for Francesco, and certainly assisted his remarkably fast flight from Japan to Rome.

*Preparation[2]

(From now to page 210 the text is from Francesco's book *55.000 Chilometri)*.

The most difficult part of my flight, contrary to what I might believe, was completed on April 23, 1925, when I left the last Italian port.

During the journey I had to face and overcome countless natural obstacles; in the preparatory period of it, however, I had to overcome difficulties relating not so much to the nature of things as to that of men: which is much more difficult.

The struggle with the elements of nature restores the spirit and invigorates the body, and if it is often difficult, it is always beautiful and loyal because one knows what one must act against; but unfortunately, this is not the case in the field of human relations.

So it was that those who saw me at the departure from Brindisi and saw me again on my arrival in Rome could notice how my physical condition was better on arrival than on departure.

The preparation of my journey was, by necessity, short and hasty. The preliminary draft was prepared by me towards the end of December 1924, and was used as a reaction to the long hours of immobility spent in the office chair, to which the needs of my position as Chief of Staff of the General Command of the Royal Air Force forced me.

I proposed with my project to demonstrate the following thesis: that today it is possible with an aircraft of the seaplane type, not even of recent model, but solidly constructed, to travel around the world as it is and even better than with a small ship, relying only on local resources. "I said, "even better", because the seaplane can also sail on land, which, obviously, is not allowed to a ship.

For the demonstration to be truly convincing, the route had to be very long: in fact, the project resulted in 55,000 kilometres, equal to almost one and a half times the length of the Earth's equator, and 12,000 kilometres more than the maximum route performed until then in flight, i.e. the round-the-world flight made by the valiant American aviators, for a total of 43,000 kilometres'.

The itinerary, moreover, always to demonstrate the validity of the thesis, had to extend between the most diverse regions in terms of climate and geographical position, So the development of it went from the 10th to the 155th meridian East Greenwich and from the 45th parallel North to the 40th parallel South, describing on earth an immense triangle whose vertices were Rome, Melbourne, Tokyo, touching the torrid and temperate areas to the North and South of the Equator, cutting the Tropic of Cancer four times and the Tropic of Capricorn twice.

The route ran for about 40,000 kilometres along the coast or in sight of land, for 8000 kilometres on the open sea, and for 7000 kilometres above the mainland.

[2] All headings marked with * indicate sections in which the text is taken from Francesco's book.

On New Year's Eve 1925 I presented the project, which was approved in principle. But subsequently, for financial reasons, it could not have run. I insisted and, to remove this difficulty, I issued a declaration in which I charged myself or my heirs with the cost of the aircraft in case of loss or failure of the journey. So my flight was decided.

The press had some inkling of it, and in a newspaper it was said that I was going to make a poor impression, with an old and outdated aircraft, instead of the magnificent performance of foreigners.

February 11: support from Mussolini[3]

Finally, on 11 February, His Excellency Mussolini, High Commissioner of the Air Force, who had personally taken the project to heart, "which was a source of great pride for me "definitively authorised the resumption of studies and the beginning of preparations.

The most delicate and important problem to be solved without delay was to define, in relation to the range of the aircraft chosen for the journey, the various points of stopover.

They had to meet the following requirements:

1. Have a distance between them less than the maximum range of the aircraft (about 1300 kilometres).
2. Offer a sheltered body of water, of sufficient size for landing and departure.
3. To have regular communications with the rest of the world, so that supplies can be sent there at little expense and without being obliged to rent a ship on purpose.
4. Offer, if possible, sufficient local resources.

These conditions, while for some areas of the route were relatively easy to satisfy, for others they were rather problematic, also because I did not have enough time to obtain the data and maps.

The whole study was carried out by me personally in the month of February, in the hours when I was free from office occupations, I used as study material, the pilot books and the maps of the Hydrographic Office of the Royal Navy, which the Ministry kindly allowed me to consult. I remember that I spent a great deal of time in the search for a landing point in New Guinea, necessary to pass from Australia to the Moluccas. I finally discovered, by induction, that there was a marsh river estuary, where I wished.

It was then necessary to concretise the program of the route and carefully examine the starting date and the time in which the various stages were to take place, in the most favourable weather conditions. This study was also made by me hand in hand with that of the itinerary, using the hydrographic material of the Royal Navy.

[3] This was relatively early in the dominance of Mussolini and he had to listen to the socialist opposition, who were wary of spending a lot of money on flights such as this. In fact, Francesco had to agree that if the aircraft was lost, he, or his heirs and successors, would repay the cost of the aircraft,

Usually, on the southern and eastern coasts of the continent there are the West Monsoons from May to September and the East Monsoons from October to March. In April and October there is generally a period of calm, which lasts about a month.

On the Australian continent from June to September, which are the winter months there, there are winds that go all around the coasts in the opposite direction to that of the indices of a clock, and therefore favourable to a path that would take this direction.

In May and June, the trade winds are not very popular in the Sunda Archipelago.

A major obstacle was the bad weather and the rains, which rage on the eastern coasts of the Bay of Bengal in the month of May, and which characterize the beginning of the Western Monsoons.

Thus I decided to make the departure no later than the first week of April, in order to pass before the change of season and find myself in Australia at the beginning of the winter season. But things turned out differently, and I found myself in Burma in the worst month, so much so that I almost lost my aircraft there.

Other obstacles were represented by the rains that from June to October, with varying intensity depending on the place, occur between the Moluccas, the Philippines and Formosa and mainly by the Typhoons, which frequent and violent loom over the area of the Philippines to Japan, with the maximum phase, in terms of frequency and intensity, between August and September. These typhoons often rage with winds that reach speeds of up to 200 kilometres per hour and often raze entire villages to the ground.

Supposing that I arrive in Melbourne at the end of May and stay a month for the engine overhaul, I had calculated to pass through that area in July, when the weather must have been, if not good, at least fair. Instead, for various events, I found myself passing through the Typhoon area, right in the most critical period, that is, between the end of August and the beginning of September.

In other words, if I had studied to pass through Burma and the Philippines on purpose in the worst season, I could not have succeeded better. But now, that I have come out of it, I am happy with the experience I have had, which shows that there are no impossible times for aircraft, just as there are no impossible times for ships; except, of course, where they are meteors of exceptional violence, against which there is no possible defense.

In the last days of February, I accelerated the study of the route, because I was anxious to pre-order the supplies immediately, knowing that at many points of the route there were no other means of communication with the civilised world, except those travelled by a steamer once a month, or even only four times a year. In fact, I could not have left with the prospect of having to stand still at any point along the route, waiting for supplies.

Therefore at the beginning of March I went to London, where I negotiated with the Shell company, which, in spite of the very limited time, undertook, by telegraphing all over the

world, to get me petrol on the dates I had fixed. I also negotiated with the Wakefield company, to get Castro oil R., which I chose as the most suitable lubricant for the engine, which had to perform a long journey without a replacement.

And I was fortunate enough because, as I later learned, Israelite Bay, on the south coast of Australia, communicates with the rest of the world only by a steamer that leaves Melbourne once every three months; and the telegram from Shell, which arrived there just the day before the steamer left, allowed the embarkation of supplies.

On my trip to London I visited the English authorities to get some moral support from them, the route taking place largely on territory of English dominion. I was very kindly received at the Air Ministry. I also visited the Australian High Commissioner in London; but the latter, when I explained the itinerary, looking at me with manifest incredulity, asked me:

“And when do you plan to leave?”

I replied: “The first of April”.

This date amused him in a very good mood. Nevertheless, I encountered some difficulty in obtaining the necessary information on the rivers of India, to establish the stopping points. The news that came to our aeronautical attaché in London was not encouraging. Indeed, in a letter to the Ministry of Aviation, he expressed himself in these exact words:

“... the above-mentioned pilots “(he speaks of two pilots who have recently returned from India) “have read to me that, in their opinion, it is 'madness' to attempt a flight across India by seaplane. rivers are dry in winter and frightfully swollen in spring, so that only a very few places could be safely landed. In March and April the snow freezes on the mountains of the North, and the rivers become swollen and very fast. Even where it is perhaps possible to alight , it is absolutely not possible to find supplies.”.

I was thus unable to obtain, before leaving, sufficient information about the landing points of the rivers in the interior of India; and yet for any good purpose I also sent supplies to Bombay and Cocanada, in order to be able to jump through the Dean. This route presented itself as more difficult, since it was necessary to fly for about 1200 km. on land; but I felt impelled to attempt it precisely by the lack of information about the possibility of landing in the Jumma and the Indus.

Numerous difficulties were encountered by the Japanese government for the overflight over Formosa Island, the Riu Kiu Islands and Japan. Thus, it came about that the final route was not achieved until a few days before I left the Philippines.

Fortunately, as I had become aware that similar difficulties had been encountered by other travellers, on previous flights over Japan, I had sent supplies to various places on the islands, so that, on occasion, it was possible for me to change course, even with a short time notice.

I chose for the trip the Savoy type seaplane (S. 16 ter), of the SIAI company, which for its solidity of construction, gave me greater confidence. This aircraft is used by our military

squadrons with a Fiat 300 HP engine; but I needed greater power, to obtain greater range, and to have greater availability of spare parts and service for the engine I needed, I chose the Lorraine 150 HP, while the Technical Management leaned towards the Lorraine 400 HP, which a more widely used engine.

The 450 HP had the advantage of greater accessibility, which is very important on long flights. I therefore decided on the latter, and I took on the responsibility for its placement on the S. 16 ter aircraft.

So I also took care of this new installation, in agreement with Ing. Marchetti SIAI, and then I did all the flight tests myself.

As time was pressing, at the beginning of February one of those aircraft was quickly delivered by the company to the Air Force, and the engine shaft was modified to accommodate the 450 HP Lorraine. In the meantime, the Lorraine company built two of these engines, two engines of such power, one to be installed in the aircraft, and the other sent to Tokyo to replace the one used in the first part of the route.

I chose as an engine engineer Ernesto Campanelli, whom I knew as one of the best and who had already accompanied me on my flights during the war and after; and I sent him to Paris to take care of the engine installation.

I hoped that everything would be ready in early March; but things, as usual, went on for a long time, and only at the end of that month was the installation of the engine on the aircraft begun.

April 3: Royal reception

On April 3 I had the honour of being received by His Majesty the King, who deigned to accept a copy of the itinerary and to express his good wishes to me.

April 4 Meeting with Mussolini

On April 4 I presented myself to His Excellency Mussolini, Head of Government and High Commissioner of the Air Force. The Honourable Mussolini had the goodness to say to me “I trust that you will complete your journey”.

“I will do everything I can,” I replied, highly pleased with those encouraging words, after the smirks of disbelief I had found elsewhere.

April 5: advice from the missionaries

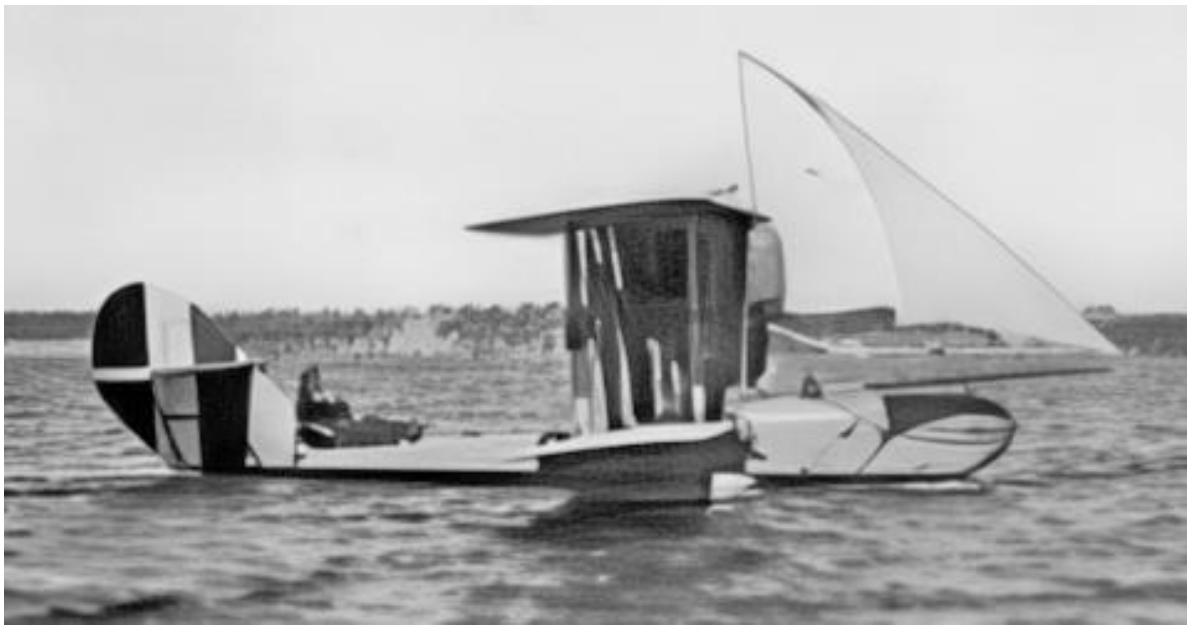
On April 5, I went to see the Missionaries' Exposition to get a rough idea of the countries I would have to pass through. I passed through the Holy Door, and on leaving it I mentally cut all the little threads that had tied me up to that time in the past; and I felt as if I were lighter, purified in spirit, strengthened in resolution. So I left Rome.

The manufacturer of the aircraft is located in Sesto Calende, at a point where Lake Maggiore, narrowing, forms the Ticino river. I did not think it advisable to settle in Sesto Calende, because there was too much movement of aviators and journalists, and I needed to work calmly.

I therefore retired a few kilometres away, to Arona, on Lake Maggiore, in absolute calm.

I did not give my address to anyone, to escape the curiosity of journalists and avoid interviews; I even spread the rumour that I would leave at the end of May, because I needed to work carefully and without interruption. The same happens to painters who do not like to see people around them, when they work on their paintings.

In fact, the tests of the aircraft were long and laborious, because I wanted to find the best way to achieve a fairly high economic speed, which at first I did not obtain. On the other hand, I wanted to work quickly because of the need to avoid, as I have already said, the bad season along the coast of Burma.



I had the aircraft adapted to a sail arrangement that Commander Maddalena, an excellent pilot and excellent sailor, had, on my instructions, studied and experimented in the Gulf of Taranto. This arrangement was to help me, in the event of a descent into the open sea due to engine failure, to reach the nearest coast by sailing, since one of the characteristics of my flight had to be to cope, with the means on board, with any misadventure. Apart from the places where I had fuel and oil available, there were few places where I could get help at any point of the 55,000 kilometres of the route. When I tested the sale on Lake Maggiore, I noticed a few giggles of disbelief from the spectators. But when they saw that the new improvised sailing ship made its tacks without difficulty and even managed to sail against the wind, no one laughed anymore.

In the meantime, after numerous flight tests and some modification of the propellers, I managed to obtain the data I wanted, assisted by a technician from the Lorraine company and by engineer Marchetti of the SIAI, to whom we owe the practical and robust construction, which allowed the aircraft to hold the sea and the air for a long time.

I installed a distiller to produce drinking water from the sea. I embarked spare food, some medicines, numerous spare parts of the engine, and work tools, so that I could carry out any repairs to the hull and the engine. As weapons, I carried a Mauser pistol, for signalling a Very pistol; and I did not forget a line and an assortment of fishhooks, in case it was regrettable that a breakdown should force us to remain a few weeks at sea.

To Commander Del Prete and Lieutenant Monti of the Royal Air Force, who assisted me a lot in the preparations and in the complicated procedures for the shipment of spare materials to various points along the route, I am pleased to repeat here my thanks.

April 19: blessing the aircraft

On April 19 I had the aircraft baptized with the name of “Gennariello”, because San Gennaro is the protector of sailors or, at least, as such he is venerated by Neapolitan fishermen.

And indeed I never had to complain about Him.

I also had the line written on the machine: “Jamme, jamme 'ncoppa, jamme jà” (Let's go up to the top, let's go!”, which I took from the famous Neapolitan song: “Funiculi, funicular”, which had already gone around the world, with good luck.

The Godmother christening the aircraft was Mrs Giaretta. The ritual bottle of champagne broke at the first blow, and I thought this a good omen. The parish priest blessed the aircraft, bathed me in holy water. His simple and moving words were the first of hundreds of speeches, by which I was targeted throughout the journey.

On this occasion Commendator Peretti, Director of the SIAI, found on the shore near J hangar, a four-leaf clover, which I religiously stuck inside the aircraft.

On the night of the 19th to the 20th I slept only three hours, busy as I was in packing my suitcases and giving the last instructions about the material I was leaving.

April 20: departure

On the morning of the 20th it was raining. The weather was dark and overcast. The last touches were still being put on the aircraft: for, even if one has forty months to prepare for a trip, always at the last moment there is always something to add or redo.

Since I did not signal my departure, only the managers and Ernestos of the manufacturer of the aircraft were present. The rain, the mud, the squalid morning, the inevitable little setbacks, and drowsiness of the bystanders, made the scene somewhat melancholy. An outsider and unsuspecting observer could never have assumed that this was the departure for a flight of 55,000 kilometres.

At 5:55 am we embarked.

“Good luck!”

“Goodbye!”

The rain had subsided. And off we went.

*The first stage: to Leros

The first section was not very happy, also because of the weather conditions. Near Ancona, we were at an altitude of about 500 meters, when sudden gusts hit us. They were so strong that the engine misfired due to lack of air at the carburettor intakes. Immediately afterwards I realised that the pencils, lined up on the card holder next to me, had disappeared, and I feared for a moment that they had ended up in the propeller. I then found them at the bottom of the high hull, where they had fallen, jumping off the sheaths, due to the shock received by the aircraft.

At Varano I was forced to seek help , because the fittings of the oil pipes broke, and only seven kilograms were left in the tank.

Ernesto redid the fittings, reinforcing them. There was no Castrol oil on the spot! We then sent a pharmacist to fetch 10 litres of castor oil. But the good man believed that it served a very different purpose, and therefore expressed his great wonder at the uncommon quantity required. Pharmacists from all over the world later provided me with providential help on various occasions, precisely with the supply of castor oil.[4]

On the same day, having completed the repairs, I set off again, while it was getting dark. When I was near Bari, the sun had set, and the lights in the city could already be seen to be lighted. Shortly after, continuing, I was hit by a strong storm from the SW, which weakened the already poor light. Other impetuous gusts of fire were so violent to the machine that the phenomenon noticed in the morning occurred again in the engine.

Finding myself in a heavy rain, I decided to alight to the first sheltered place to spend the night; near Torre Pelosa, which offered a fair shelter from the wind. When I landed it was already night, amidst the curiosity of the fishing population of that small village.

I remember that that evening we struggled a lot trying to put the hoods on the engine. It was the first time we had done this operation, which later became habitual. But that evening, not succeeding in our purpose, we had to cover the motor as best we could.

Having secured the night surveillance of some guards, I ran to the telegraph to give my news to Rome; I was later hosted by a generous squire of the village.

“And where are you going?” “he asked me.

“To Melbourne,” I answered.

“I don't know this country”. Is it perhaps close to Tricase?

“No, it's a little further away..”.

“Oh, excuse me, I didn't understand the name well”.

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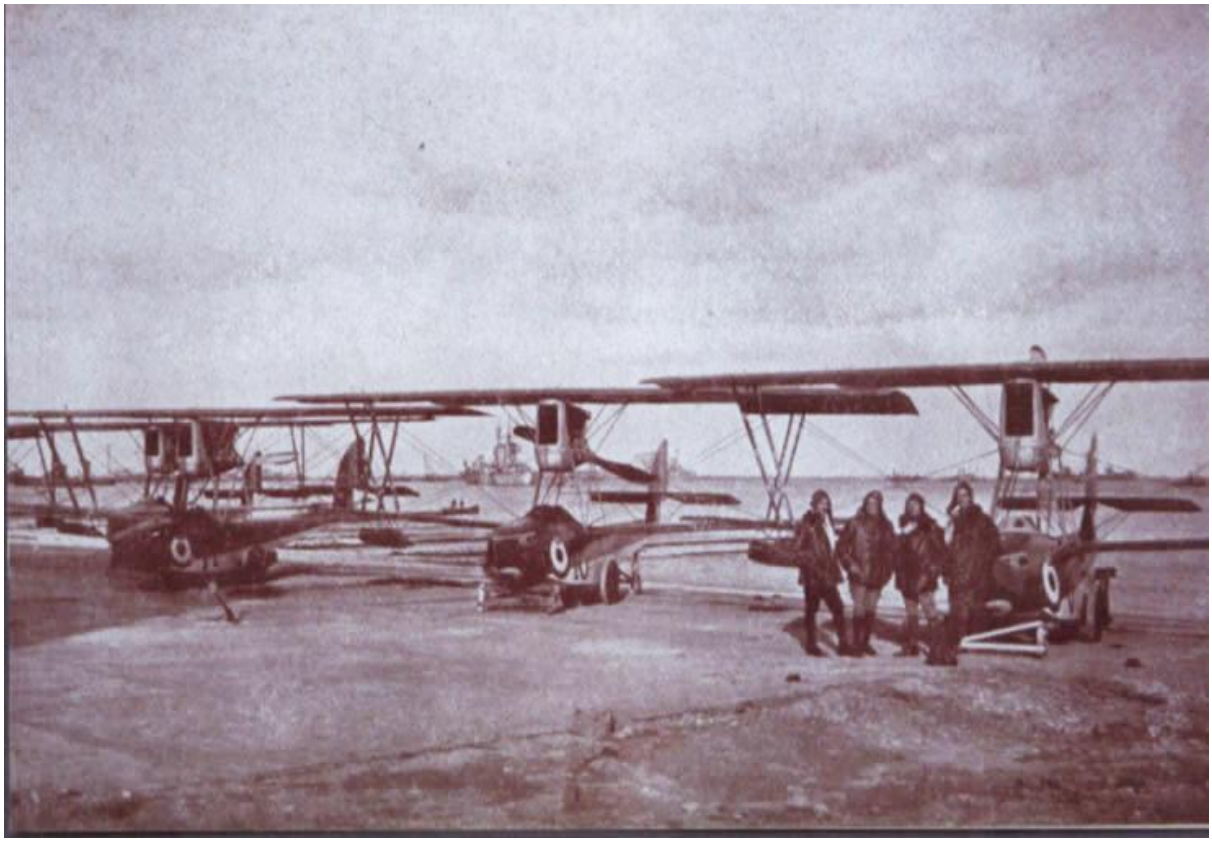
[4] The brand name *Castrol* comes from the fact that the castor oil was an early lubricant the Wakefield company supplied for internal combustion engines. At this stage it could still be used as engine oil, even for the modern engine of the Savoia. The purchase of castor oil for this purpose (rather than its usual use as a laxative medicine) happened at other times on this journey – see pages 42, 149 and 186.

The following morning, aircraft from the Brindisi seaplane base, which I had warned of the delay, threw out messages, warning me that the weather was bad and threatened to get worse. I then left without delay, and shortly afterwards I alighted to Brindisi in violent gusts.

Weather signals from Saseno forecast southerly storms. It was a really good start!

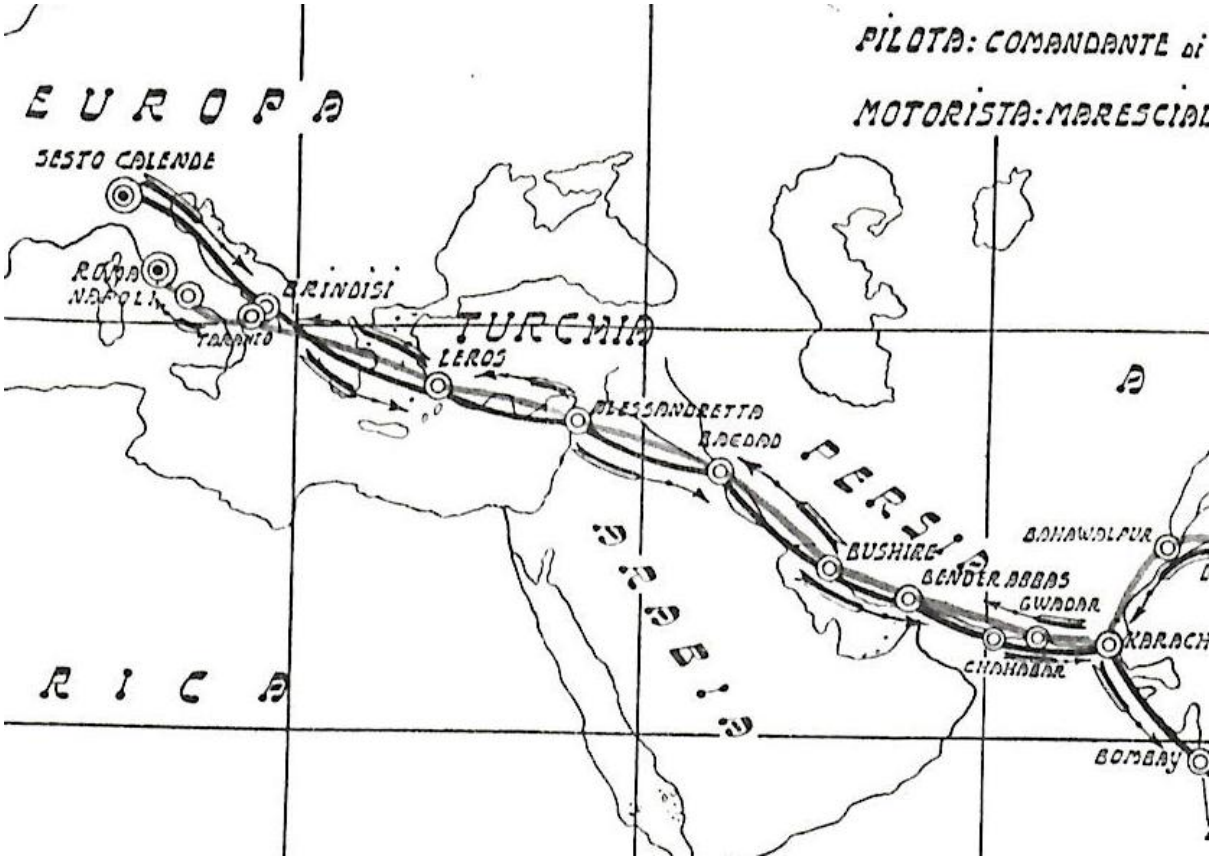
I took advantage of the stop to do some checks and adjustments of the aircraft and the engine. The seaplane base of Brindisi was well known to me because I had spent much of my war service there, in command of a group of seaplane squadrons flying in the lower Adriatic and on the opposite Austrian shore. How many good and generous flying companions I had not lost there!



Wartime aircraft at Brindisi

I felt a little like the father of that station, which under my command had gradually grown and developed. Each stone was familiar to me and had a story or represented my hard work.

I went to see some pines that I had planted before I left the seaplane. They were then simple shrubs, and today, after about 6 years, they are already saplings, which form almost a grove. These trees had been a particular care of mine and it seemed to me almost. looking at them, to feel an intimate communion between me and them, two so different expressions of living nature.



Map 1: Italy to Karachi

April 23: across the Aegean Sea

On April 23, the Aegean bulletins indicated good weather. In Brindisi, the weather was always bad, but the wind had turned to the NW. I decided to leave.

The take-off was not easy, as the direction of the wind did not give me enough space. So, in order to make space I had to move far away from the shore, and therefore give up the shelter.

Waves and rain splashed over us, but at last I succeeded in putting the aircraft on the step [5]and, manoeuvring between the boats that encumbered the harbour, in pulling it out of the water.

I first followed the coast, sometimes forced to descend to a few meters above the sea, to pass under the clouds and downpours.

At 3 o'clock I left the coast. A veil of clouds soon hid it from view.

“We are off!” “I said to myself.

[5] Francesco often refers to the ‘redan’, a term that Google Translate does not list. It must mean the stage of takeoff that is known in English as ‘on the step’. When a seaplane takes off, it builds speed gradually, but can only get fast enough to take off when it is skimming on the surface of the water, not ploughing through the water. Francesco describes 90° turns at high speed in bad weather in several of his take-offs, which indicates considerable skill, a very seaworthy flying boat, and even some luck – or, as Francesco would prefer to think, divine protection.

Italy, our beautiful homeland, was still close, but if was never far from our thoughts! Would we see her again?

I felt that my task was not light. And it was a duty of honour to succeed in an enterprise, conceived and desired by me, and on which the Government had generously trusted, giving me the opportunity to start. I felt that, in addition to the rest, I had the responsibility for the good name of our Air Force.

Would the undertaking be beyond human strength?

I had evaluated and foreseen all the difficulties, and none had seemed insurmountable to me.

I felt confident. We had everything we needed: a wooden hull, a few square meters of canvas, a pulsating engine, a propeller invisible in its swirling rotation, and above all the will to succeed.

The wind, turning to the South, however, slowed my progress. At last. just before Corfu the weather improved; but the wind from the south had increased, so I decided to shorten the route, cutting through Agrigento and thus aiming for the Gulf of Corinth, shortly after Patras.

Here the weather became excellent. You could see the mythical and historic mountains of Parnassus.

This route was well known to me, having already flown it in the past years, but went much closer then than I did now,

Towards noon I passed the Strait of Corinth, which had a bad reputation among the airmen for the strong pockets of air that were encountered there. I knew them well, and I was ready for them, but they were exceptionally kind to me this time.

A profound calm reigned over the Aegean Sea. From the placid waters emerged the clear blue-violet profiles of the randomly scattered islands.

As I approached them and flew past them, the contours of the coast became clear and colourful. We could see the cliffs overlooking the sea, the coves and gullies entering the still dark-green waters, the resting flotillas of rugged fishing boats used to storms, White fishermen's houses, nestled in the bottom of the bays, smiled at the rays of the noonday sun.

Here is the island of Salamis, and behind it Piraeus, and here are the houses of Athens whitening in the distance, through the milky grey curtain of the mist. I cross the southern tip of Attica and fly over Selene, Keo, Syros and Myconos. I leave Naxos on the right and Nicaria on the left. I peer into the haze ahead, and see first Patmos and then Leros, our goal for today,

A few more minutes and the island takes shape, unfolding under my gaze its green gardens, its white houses and its windmills that surmount the highest hills. at Porto Laki, where some units of our Navy are quietly resting.

A half-circuit with a reduced engine, and the aircraft alights on the placid water.

In Leros I found many good friends. The commander of the seaplane base had breakfast ready; the Metropolitan made a speech to us; kind ladies made the afternoon more pleasant.

April 24: to Alexandretta[6]

The next morning, at 6:40 am, I took off. But I had to alight immediately afterwards, because the aileron controls did not work well. We put in some oil, and we set off again. The weather was splendid. The navigation to Alexandretta was thus the best of my whole voyage; and I never needed to use the controls to correct the position of the aircraft.

The first part of the flight took place over the islands and along the coast of Anatolia. I left Kalymnos and Kos on the right, still asleep in the placid spring morning.

I passed over the Doric promontory and in sight of Rhodes: I followed the jagged Anatolian coast to Cape Khelidonia; from here I crossed the Gulf of Antalya to Cape Anamour.

A Turkish sailing ship, motionless because of the absolute lack of wind, its sails floppy and hanging along the masts, waited for Allah to send at least the breath of a light breeze. I lowered myself, waking the sailors torpidly lying on the deck with the cheerful roar of my engine. I saw them shake and look at me dreamily.

On the right I sighted in the distance the blue coast of the island of Cyprus, proclaimed by poets of antiquity, queen of seductions and perfumes and consecrated to Venus Aphrodite.

On the left, the rocky crags and cliffs of the Caramania presented their gloomy depths barely veiled by the morning vapours, which the sun was already beginning to dissipate.

Another hour's flight off the Gulf of Tarsus, and here we are in that of Alexandretta. In Alexandretta they were waiting for my arrival, but not for that day.

A French air force officer asked me:

“When do you plan to leave?

“Tomorrow.

“And where are your wheels?

“I don't have any.

“And how do you go on earth?”

“I'll rely on that one,” and I pointed to the engine.

He believed that my seaplane could be transformed into a terrestrial aircraft by means of a of a trolley, for the routes to be taken above ground.

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[6] Alexandretta is on the north-east corner of the Mediterranean, now known as İskenderun.

That afternoon was a great effort for Ernesto, because the oil tank had unbroken at the soldered joints so he had to disassemble it to weld it. The work was finished late the next morning, so we stayed until the next day.

The balance of that afternoon can be summed up as follows: cheers, good wishes, lunch, toasts and dances.

We first flew over the islands and along the coast of Anatolia. I left Kalymnos and Kos on the right, still asleep in the placid spring morning.

I passed over the Doric promontory and in sight of Rhodes: I followed the jagged Anatolian coast to Cape Khelidonia; from here I cut off the Gulf of Antalya as far as Cape Anamour.

That afternoon was a great effort for Ernesto, because the oil tank had unsoldered so he had to disassemble and re-weld it. The work was not ready until the following morning, late in the hour.

*From Syria to India: April 25

On April 25 I was not ready to leave before 10 am, because of the repair work on the oil tank, and this delay displeased me not a little, because I knew that, to cross the deserts of Syria and Mesopotamia, the best hours are those of dawn or sunset, and the worst are those of the afternoon.

On the beach where many people were already gathered to farewell me, the French governor, the Italian consul and the religious leader came to give me their courteous greetings.

On that day I had the opportunity to experience the inconveniences of departures with many spectators. To greet the kind people who crowded on the beach, I had temporarily placed my flying suit, my swimming cap and my sunglasses on a dry boat. When pleasantries are over, I look for my stuff. But there was nothing left on the boat: certainly some souvenir collector (we suppose) had taken it.

“We are dismayed,” said the onlookers.

“It doesn't matter. Good thing they didn't take the aircraft away. There is a remedy for the rest”.

“And what will you do now?

“I do without. You can see that they want to send me naked to our destination”.

Fortunately, I was able to make up for it with a canvas over-all and a wool balaclava.

Indeed, during the journey, I suffered somewhat from the cold that day, but afterwards I did not regret it too much, for the stolen garment was made of flannel and would not have served me in the hot spots, which I passed through afterwards. I was annoyed by the lack of sunglasses: all aviators know how to spend many hours steering the aircraft with the sun in their face is very disturbing; but fortunately I was able to get some excellent glasses in Baghdad.

At 10:30 I was in the air. I should have risen to about 2000 meters, to pass over the buttress of the Syriac mountains, which are parallel to the coast and whose slope rises almost from the water. But as I did not want to waste any more time and consume too much gasoline, in view of the headwinds I might encounter on the Baghdad route, I flew through the Bailan Pass at a height of 1000 meters, or about 200 meters above the ground.

It was faster, but in the valley I had to work hard to deal with sudden gusts and whirlpools that I found at such an altitude.

Later I got used to flying at low altitude. In fact, when you make long journeys above land with seaplanes, it is useless to fly too high, since, if the engine fails, you are always forced to descend on land, whatever the altitude of the aircraft.

Of course, flying at low altitude, the area in which you can choose a place for landing is more limited; but on the other hand it is easier to see the ground and be ready to find makeshift landing fields.

I passed over Aleppo at 11 am I. The land beneath was fertile, worked and green everywhere. But shortly after, in sight of the Euphrates, the desert began in all its immense and desolate monotony: endless plains of sand as far as the eye could see, interrupted here and there by hills or plateaus that were also sandy.

The horizon in the distance was just like a marine horizon. Only the tortuous bed of the Euphrates broke the monotony, like the footprint of a gigantic snake.

“What degradation,” I thought, “this region has had! Once it was a very civilised and fertile country. Now, it all comes down to a few rare and brief crops along the banks”. Arches of ruined bridges and ruins of cities barely emerging from the sand are the only documents of the past civilisation, when the Euphrates was still the border of the Roman Empire. At that time it took several weeks to get from Rome to here, the border of the Empire; now, in less than three days we are already there.

But the world changes, and perhaps the Roman emperors would never have sent their legions to Mesopotamia if the conditions then had been what I see today: sand and then sand and then sand. Once the wealth of the country was agriculture, today it is naphtha; then the Roman legionaries flocked here; today the British aviators.

In the meantime I had increased my altitude to about 2500 meters, and nevertheless, a very fine sand was deposited on the crystals of the windscreen. Here and there swirls of sand rose towards the sky, sometimes forcing me to change my course.

The aircraft was tossed continuously, and I always had to work at the controls, often exerting considerable strength.

Ramadi

At Ramadi, I left the course of the Euphrates and headed for the Tigris, sighting Baghdad after about half an hour.

The city extends almost entirely on the left bank, joined by a pontoon bridge to the right bank, where there are many gardens and many palm trees. Descending to lower altitude, to see better and be seen, I was still tossed about by vortices of air, as if for a final farewell of the tiring crossing.

I alighted south of the city, near the British airfield, which stood near the left bank.

The current was very strong, justifying the Arabic name of the area which means arrow, and although I strongly anchored to the bottom of the river, the aircraft slowly swerved from side to side.

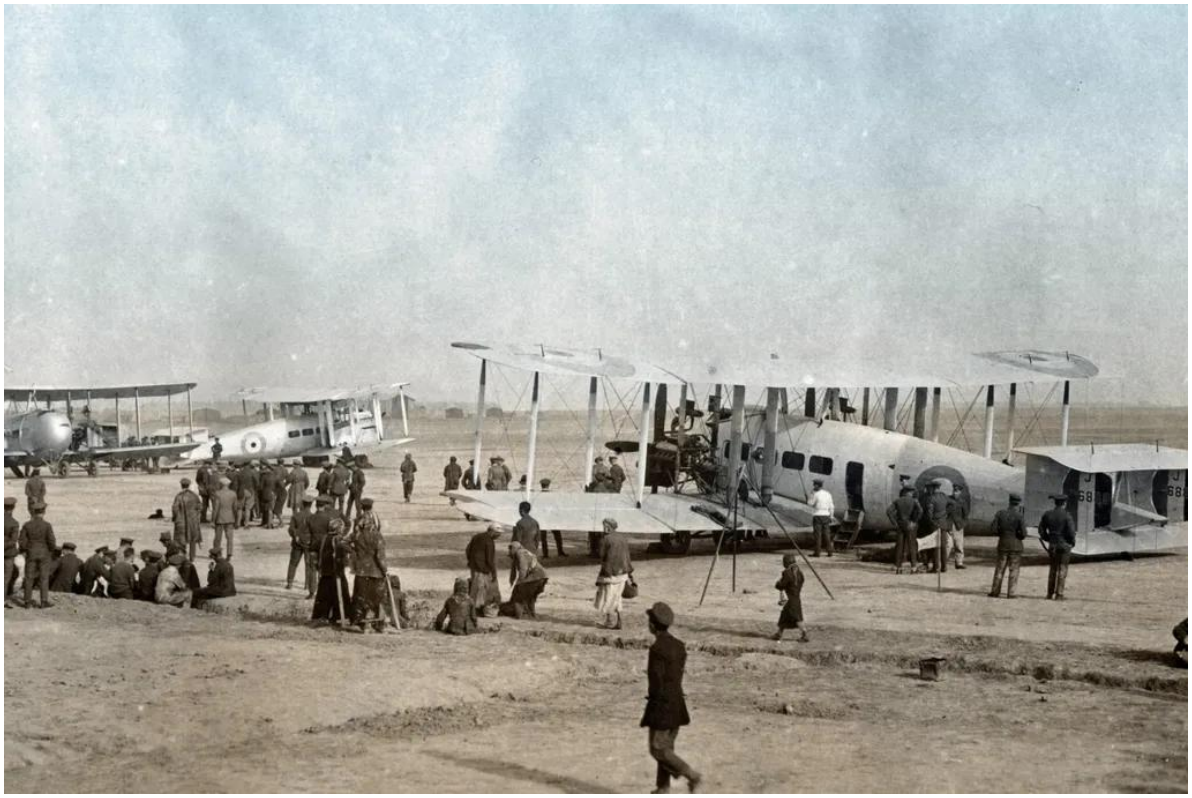
It was the first time that a seaplane from the Mediterranean landed on the waters of the Tigris.

On land they were not waiting for me, since I had arrived before the telegram sent the previous evening from Alessandretta. After some time a boat came out to meet me, and then came a motorboat which towed us to the bank where the current was less strong. The manoeuvre was not easy, and lasted about two hours.

Immediately afterwards we started refuelling, working until 8.30 pm, when I was finally able to go to the city.

I immediately realised that the Baghdad I had imagined was very different from the Baghdad that I now saw. It was just like a village, perhaps with more dust and mud huts than elsewhere.

The descendants of the Assyrian-Babylonians did not really look busy, with many crowded the cafes smoking and lazing around. Perhaps this indolence is the effect of the sultry climate. They assured me that when the sirocco blows in summer, the inhabitants take refuge in cellars four or five meters deep underground, to stay cool.



The British Royal Air Force had a strong presence in the Middle East, based largely in Cairo, as seen above. The various RAF establishments were very supportive of the di Pinedo flight.

The English aviators provided me with courteous, straightforward hospitality at their club, previously the German consulate. I spoke with some of them, and I realised that they were concerned about the dangers of long crossings planned above land.

The same had happened to me in London.

Well, I find that many aviators, even those belonging to a magnificent population of sailors, do not see that seaplanes are the only flying machines that can really go

anywhere, since 90 percent, and perhaps more. of the major centres of the world are on the sea or on the great river arteries. On the other hand, I go so far as to affirm that the aeroplane lines currently in operation in the interior of the European continent could almost all be crossed by seaplanes, with greater economy of operation and equipment and with greater safety and practicality of operation. On the Paris-London route, for example, the traveller takes about two and a half hours for the flight, and the same amount, at departure and arrival, for the journey from the city to the aerodrome and vice versa. Seaplanes, on the other hand, would allow direct flight from Pont-de-la-Concorde and Westminster Abbey, that is, in the heart of the two metropolises. I have seen this done.

My room, which I returned to early to leave early the next day, had a terrace overlooking the Euphrates, and before going to sleep I lingered to contemplate the magnificent spectacle of the clear, starry night. The clear and brilliant sky invited contemplation, and it was understandable how the Chaldeans had discovered here the first laws of astronomy.

When I went to the aircraft, Ernesto told me that the oil tank had unsoldered again. Given the time needed to repair it, it was necessary to delay the departure by 24 hours.

This photograph may have been taken by Francesco himself, and if so it would have been on 26 April at the spectacular remains of Ctesiphon, which was the royal capital of the Iranian empires for over 800 years. It is about 35 km from Baghdad.

I took advantage of the opportunity to visit Air Vice-Marshal Higgins, who kindly offered me the help of the British authorities. Air Vice-Marshal Higgins was also commander of the land and river units; in Mesopotamia the English base their dominion mainly on air

forces, supported by units mounted on trucks, cavalry units and river gunboats. In desert regions, any movement of troops requires the use of long and vulnerable caravans for the transport of supplies. On the other hand, with a few aeroplanes it is often possible to obtain the same result as a column of soldiers, and with a flight of a few hours it is possible to dominate a situation for which numerous troops would be required, with long caravans and about twenty days of operations.

April 27 to Bandar Abbas

27 April I was already on the move at 3:30 in the morning, as I thought I would leave at the first light of dawn and make up for the time lost for repairing the tank, completing two stages in the same day, and arriving in the evening at Banda Abbas.

But my plans soon went up in smoke! Personnel who were supposed to help with the unmooring of the aircraft arrived on the scene late. In order to warm up the engine before leaving, I had turned the aircraft with my tail on the ground, where some soldiers had to hold it until I signalled it.

I had thought of letting go as soon as the engine was hot, but due to a nod from the engineer, misinterpreted, the aircraft was given up prematurely. I increased the gas to be able to steer better and get away from the shore; But the engine stopped.

I found myself at the mercy of the current and ran a serious risk of losing the aircraft, because it was quickly dragged against, a gunboat moored about 50 meters downstream from the aircraft.

I sent Ernesto to the wing, and he managed not to make it hit the moorings of the gunboat. I, in turn, lying on the deck, managed with my feet to prevent the bow of that from gutting my fragile hull, and while crawling along the gunboat. and bumping a little here and a little there, I averted disaster.

My tribulations, however, were not over, for behind that gunboat another small ship was moored, against which the danger of a tragedy was repeated.

Finally, free from alarming obstacles, always carried by the current, I went back to the ground.

The manoeuvring staff, meanwhile, ran along the river to come and help me. The English officer was very much afraid, as I later learned, that my journey would end in Baghdad, but fortunately we had no other damage than the crack in the windscreen. But the glass, a triplex crystal, despite the damage suffered, continued to render good service throughout the journey.

Finally, as God willed, at 7 am I was able to repeat the manoeuvre, and I took off.

At 10 o'clock I passed in sight of Basra, where the Tigris joins the Euphrates in a single estuary crossed by ships and boats of all sizes. I was on the Persian Gulf, and went to the compass for Suscir, where I arrived at noon after a peaceful navigation.

I made a tour of the city, especially to inform the agents in charge of the supply of my arrival, I studied from above a convenient place for mooring the aircraft, and I alighted

near the chosen point, then floating slowly towards the land: I stopped the aircraft in the shallows. A crowd of natives came to meet me, splashing in the water; among whom blacks abounded. At first they kept a respectful distance, then took came closer despite my desperate attempts to communicate.

And they came nearer again, till at last we were literally surrounded by people up to their waists in the water, peering into the hull, and touching everything to see what the wings were made of.

These blacks, descendants of slaves imported from Africa, are, as I was later able to ascertain, very good sailors.

After a certain time, here are finally some white people. One is the British vice-consul, another the supply agent. They came towards us in a boat overloaded with other people; but the current having caused them to drift under one wing, they all fell on one side, so that the boat capsized, and they all went into the water. One of them clung desperately to the aircraft for fear of drowning, and although I shouted at him to let go so as not to do any damage, the wretch naturally cared more for his skin than for the canvas of my wings, to which he clung tenaciously. He was then picked up all dripping with water and very little satisfied with the bath he had taken.

On the back of a negro I was carried ashore, pausing to take photographs of the colourful crowd; but on the improvised mount I was assailed by a crowd of filthy and petulant onlookers. Policemen, who differed from the others only in the different headgear, tried to free me, distributing, to starboard and left, blows from stirrups.

I immediately started looking for supplies: the gasoline was already ready; but no trace of oil; after much research I learned that it was still in the Customs warehouses.

In the meantime it had become late, and it was no longer possible to resume the journey in the day.

I decided to leave early the next morning, to possibly make two stages in the same day. And since the aircraft could not remain where it was, because of the tide, by means of a boat I rearranged it further offshore, at the height of the Customs building.

The following morning, at 5 am, I began the manoeuvre, but the take-off did not succeed due to the too much load and the excessively hot and muggy air.

It must now be noted that our anchorage was to the east of the city of Bushehr, near the estuary of a stream beyond which were numerous sandbanks, emerging during the low tide and completely submerged in the high tide.

On the map in my possession, the limits of the sandbanks were not well marked; Therefore, while I was floating working on the controls to put the aircraft on the “step”, suddenly, from the colour of the water, I realised that we were on one of the sandbanks: I barely had time to stop the engine, that we were already aground.

A boat came to help us, but it too ran ashore.

In the meantime I could see that the aircraft had no damage and that the tide was rising. I was very fortunate, that otherwise I would have had to wait several hours to disengage, as there was a difference in height of several meters between high and low tide. Instead, after about half an hour, I was afloat again. I then made another attempt to take off, which did not succeed this time either.

The strong wind had lifted a little of the sea, and the aircraft, heavy with the heavy load, jumped dangerously, but without taking sufficient speed to sustain itself in the air.

I went back to anchor, unloaded 150 litres of gasoline from the tanks and decided to also unload the compressed air cylinder (which was used for automatic starting); besides, having a slight loss, it was no longer of any use to me. So I gained a few more kilograms of weight.

At 9 am I started the engine again; but the current had increased so much that the anchor had such a strong grip on the bottom that I was unable to raise it, and indeed I found myself at a certain moment in a very precarious situation because even the combined strength of me and Ernesto we could not hold on to it and I had just enough time to tie it on to the side of the aircraft. Now, since we were tied to the middle of the aircraft we got side onto the current. I was just able to slip the rope through a fitting on the bow and got the aircraft head on to the current, just in time because the wind was freshening to about 7 knots.

Reassured about the safety of the aircraft, I tried again to weigh anchor with the help of a motorboat, but even this did not work. The speedboat belonged to a Japanese steamer, which was offshore and gave us excellent assistance.

At last a motor brigantine came to the rescue, to which we passed the cable and , after long and laborious efforts, by means of the winch, which was on board the ship, we managed to recover the anchor: this was entangled in another still larger one and a tangle of cables abandoned at the bottom. We had no chance of lifting it by ourselves!

Our clothes were literally soaked with sweat from the great toil that lasted until 5 in the morning.

At last we were ready, and with the aircraft lightened I took off easily. I set sail for the South, and began to skirt Persia. The weather was good but we flew over a desolate and wild region. Great mountain ranges could be seen rising from the earth, which has the appearance of an immense field of dried mud.

At 11.50 I realised that the water thermometer showed too high a temperature. I thought that we might be leaking water, so to make sure of it I descended into a small cove: it was only little blockage. The take-off was very difficult because of the rough sea, and we headed into a strong headwind which slowed down the flight.

At 2.25 pm I was on Banda Abbas; I alighted and moored the aft aircraft to a motorboat owned by the English vice-consul Mr Richardson.

From the land they sent me a launch, I disembarked, received by the English consul who had turned out the cavalry as on honour guard.

We were very tired from the laborious manoeuvre of the morning and therefore I decided that we should stay a day, also to repair the problem with the water thermometer.

The Consul was extremely kind to us, and offered us hospitality in his beautiful residence.

The next morning I went to visit the Persian authorities, the governor, and another personage, whom I do not quite remember who he was, but whom, I was told, it was necessary to visit.

He received us in a room where valuable objects were collected: carpets, porcelain, bronzes. The picture gallery, however, left something to be desired. The conversation was not very brilliant, but a framed oleography was brilliant: it detached ball detached itself from the wall and fell with great noise, scaring away a family of salamanders who were dozing in its shelter, and making a small slaughter of the ornaments enthroned on the table below.

As I took my leave, I received from the illustrious guest his visiting card, which bore his stroke engraved: a fashion that was truly new to me.

During that day, Ernesto had repaired the radiator and checked the hull of the aircraft. Despite all the adventures we had had it was in perfect order.

Mr Richardson had carefully prepared a basket of provisions for us which we had difficulty in putting on board and on April 30 we took off. After an hour and a half I noticed a leak in the oil tank. It was insignificant, so I continued on to Chahbar, where I landed at a quarter past I0 in magnificent weather.

May 3: Chahbar (frying pan adventure!)

Chahbar is a small village on the Gulf of Oman, The inhabited by blacks and Persians. There is an airfield belonging to the British, and a telegraph post, also English.

The work on the oil tank was quite long and forced a delay 24 hours. First of all, we had to move the aircraft to a safer face. This was easily carried out with the valuable help of some blacks who could swim like fish. In fact, one of them loaded the anchor on his shoulders and, walking completely submerged on the bottom of the sea for 50 meters, placed the anchor in the right position, to which we attached a cable.

We removed the tank and took it to the headquarters of the telegraph post where the officers kindly allowed us to work. But we immediately found that we needed a piece of copper sheet, which could not be found.

After much searching, Ernesto found a frying pan in the kitchen and went to get it.

“A frying pan?” exclaimed the Indian cook, clinging to the pan. Ernesto tried to pull it from the cook, who objected strongly: “But with this one one makes food; it is not used for devil's machines!”

The quarrel reached me and I resolved it diplomatically with the commander of the telegraph post; so the frying pan ended its earthly career in the hands of Ernesto. He triumphantly began at once to manipulate it with a hammer and a file under the eyes of the cook, who, certainly, witnessing the sacrilege with a melancholy air, thought of the omelettes he would never make there again.

The heat was really oppressive. The work was completed late, and it was therefore necessary to postpone the assembly of the tank on the aircraft until the next morning. The next day the operation was carried out, but the weather was no longer as beautiful as the day before. A wind had risen from the SW, to which the bay was completely open and exposed. The sea was also swelling menacingly.

The take-off was rather difficult. I had myself towed by a boat, to a point in the roadstead where it seemed to me that there was a little shelter; but it was useless. I finally started the engine to leave.

We were battered by large waves, which prevented me from seeing from the bow. So, slowly, without realizing it, I came slightly to the left, bringing the aircraft side on to the wind. A huge wave hit us, and the right float was severely damaged. I immediately and stopped the engine and let the aircraft drift towards shore.

I resigned myself to a long delay. My eagerness to take off in those sea conditions and with the aircraft heavily loaded was a mistake, which I paid for with four days of delay and hard work in Chahbar.

I understood that if I wanted to complete my journey I had to be more prudent for the future.

We had to repair the float and it first had to be removed from the aircraft. It was necessary haul the aircraft ashore.

The manoeuvre was long and difficult, as it was not easy to get along with the natives, who did not understand that the seaplane is a very fragile thing and cannot be handled like a fishing boat. It was necessary to haul the aircraft over a rather rough esplanade, so that we used to slide the hull some of the rollers that the local fishermen use to put their boats into the sea.

Despite the use of the rollers, the aircraft did not move easily. A line of 30 strong men, stretched out on two ropes could hardly pull it up the uphill slope. Suddenly the ropes broke and everyone fell to the ground, Everybody was laughing except me, worried about the turn things were taking.

When, after much effort, the seaplane began to move, the colourful crowd started moving fast, which was a great danger for the aircraft, which needed to be continuously guided on the rollers. To stop the crew, I had to shout like a madman and distribute punches left and right.

At last we got the aircraft into a convenient position; but the tail had suffered a broken spar, due to a badly placed roller. Fortunately, this failure was not serious. I was hoarse from all the shouting.

Immediately the float was dismantled. It was now a matter of repairing it. In the village there was only one carpenter, who had no other tools for work than a drill and a hatchet. We had no suitable wood: eventually a little beech was found, which was good for the frames of the float and a few slats of packaging boxes were good for making the planking.

The veranda of the telegraph post became our workshop.

The carpenter, who was to come to help and bring the necessary wood, could not be found. After three or four hours of searching he arrived, dragged, almost by force, by a soldier from the telegraph station. The poor devil had vanished because he was afraid of compromising his reputation, frightened by the difficulty of the work he was asked to do. We comforted him as best we could, and told him that it was enough for him to help, so he did very little, crouching on the ground and holding the wood between his toes, sawing off a few pieces, driving some nails, and pocketing his wages.

Under an enervating heat, Ernesto busily set to work, helped by me and the English officers, with whom I pretended I had some carpentry skills..

To make the float watertight, a second tin cover was made, using some empty petrol drums.

Finally, a good coat of tar was passed over everything and the work was ready on May 4 at noon. I think Ernesto has lost a few kilograms of weight. He aroused the unanimous admiration of the officers of the telegraph post for his resistance to fatigue and for his ability to successively act as a carpenter, welder and painter.

On the afternoon of the 4th I put the aircraft back into the sea with great difficulty and with some anxiety. In the meantime I had previously unloaded a part of the gasoline, to reduce the weight, and landed the spare propeller, placed in the tail, and which I sent to Karachi by means of the mail steamer that very day departing from Chahbar.

During the manoeuvre I broke out in a cold sweat several times, fearing for the safety of the aircraft. To explain myself to the people who helped me, I elected to the dignity of leader of the manoeuvre one of the blacks who were there and who seemed to me the quickest and most intelligent, and I gave them orders, indicating with drawings on paper the operations to be carried out.

From time to time the crew stopped, and everyone, to give each other time, clapped their hands together, singing in chorus and invoking Allah. If I hadn't been seriously concerned about the fate of the aircraft, I would have found something to laugh about.

The scene deserved to be filmed; I could not take care of it personally and asked an English officer to retract the manoeuvre, explaining to him the handling of my cinematographic camera. But things went wrong; Shortly after, the officer came to me

very desolate for having broken the crank of the camera. This was then set aside, and shortly afterwards one of the blacks, in the enthusiasm of the manoeuvre, put his foot on the stand, breaking it into two pieces; so there was no more talk of it.

Actually, I need to explain about the cinema camera. It would certainly have been interesting to have photographic or cinematographic documents, but I was in a position to be the main actor and therefore could not deal with portraying any views. Conversely, when I had the opportunity to do so, the subjects were not worthy of interest and so I could report very little of my trip.

After three hours of manoeuvring, the aircraft was finally put into the sea without, fortunately, suffering new failures. We loaded our suitcases, and I decided to leave for the next day, early in the morning.

On May 5 we went on board early, we dumped a few litres of water that had infiltrated the hull during the night, and around 7:30 I tried to leave. Our bad luck continued: because despite many attempts, the engine refused to start. Ernesto was sweating so much from the high temperature (about 40 centigrade), that every now and then he had to take off his shirt and twist it as if it had been immersed in water.

I must say here that before we had a special system for the automatic start-up of the engine, for which compressed air contained in a cylinder was required. This would have to be loaded mechanically where possible, or otherwise by hand with a special pump.

After two or three stages, when the compressed air supply of the cylinder was finished, we saw that it was useless to hope to find a compressor to reload it or even more difficult to compress the air by using with the hand pump. The cylinder, among other things, was leaking: and so in Bushehr I had dumped it.

To start the engine, Ernesto turned the propeller by hand to give compression and then I started the engine with the starter magneto.

Now, that morning the engine did not want to start, and after a while Ernesto stopped, exhausted. After a short rest, the attempts were resumed; and finally, after two and a half hours, the engine started.

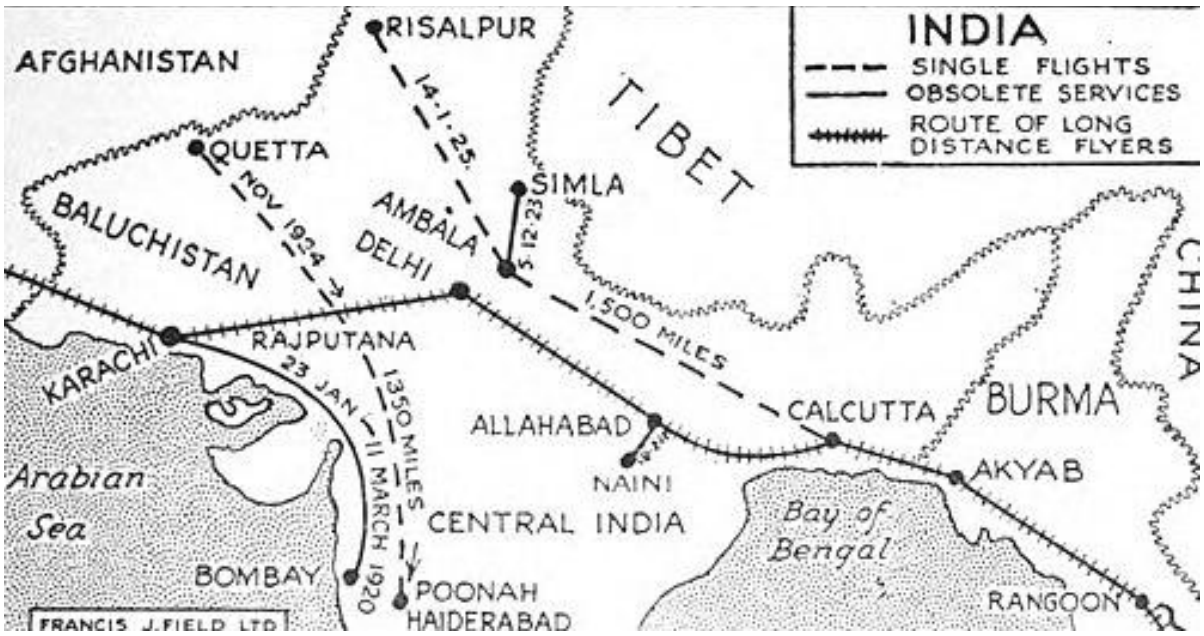
The journey proceeded without incident. An hour before arriving in Karachi, I left the coast, which was heading north, and headed for the compass on the city, where I arrived at 3 pm. They had previously signalled me to land outside the port and then float to the mooring point assigned to me. The sea was rough, and it was not prudent to land there so I flew directly into the port, stopping the aircraft right where MJ had been indicated, that is, at Punta Manora.

They then told me that my manoeuvre had caused great emotion to the officer who had kindly been placed at my disposal by the Commander of the Karachi Air Depot, and who was responsible for any accident that had happened to me.

As seaplanes had never alighted in Karachi, when they saw me descend among the many ships and boats in the harbor, they feared that I would smash into a boat. Even the

newspapers found it wonderful that I had alighted into Karachi as if I had known it for a long time. Instead, it had been the simplest thing in this world.

I had thus arrived in India much later than I had anticipated and hoped. The vicissitudes had not discouraged me: on the contrary, they proved advantageous to me from a certain side, because I gained useful experience from them for the continuation of the journey.



Britain's main interest in Indian aviation was the use of aircraft attacks to control recalcitrant tribal subjects of the Empire, but there was also a beginning of civil aviation, with designated airports being developed at Calcutta, Allahabad and Bombay. This map is dated at 1925. Francesco's aircraft is believed to be the first seaplane to pass through India.

*The crossing of India

Karachi had had a busy year in aviation, being a major base for the around-the-world flight of the Douglas World Cruiser aircraft. It was developing as a major stop for British airline activities and was being investigated as a possible terminus for airship flights between Great Britain and India. Military aircraft like those seen in the photo had Karachi as a major base; they were stationed throughout the frontier areas to maintain British control by bombing recalcitrant tribesmen, a reprehensible practice which was popular at the time. There were no seaplanes in the area.

At the anchor post, assigned to me at Punta Manora, there was a slipway, which I took advantage of to put the aircraft ashore and to make the general checks on the engine and hull, made necessary by the adventure of Chahbar; all the more so since I had to prepare for one of the most difficult crossings of the whole journey: from Bombay to Cocanada.

The hull, despite the hardships suffered, had no damage. Only a strip of copper under the bottom had unbolted. It was nailed back on: the underwater part of the aircraft was repainted and the wings were adjusted.

So I stayed in Karachi for a couple of days. I received here by telegram the congratulations of the Viceroy of the Indies.

Colonel Hicks, who commanded the British Air Depot at Karachi, was a great excellent comrade, and did everything to make my forced stop more pleasant.

The first evening he took me to the theatre, where a company of amateurs was reciting a play which must have been very amusing, judging by the mad laughter of the audience, but whose spirit, frankly, I could not grasp well, both because I was not too familiar with the subtleties of the English language, and because, because of my tiredness, Morpheus closed my eyes forcefully.

On the second evening he organized a pleasant party for a canoeing trip on the estuary of the river Malir. We camped on a sandbank, right in the middle of the river; we took a swim in the moonlight, and then dined on the sandy island. We had to interrupt our supper in haste, however, because the tide was rising, threatening to submerge our camp, and giving us just enough time to save ourselves and the dishes.

It would have been pragmatic to start a "flirt" with one of the kind companions in the moonlight; but I had other things on my mind and I was thinking of the Ganges and the Godaveri.

"Are you unmarried?" "asked one of the young ladies.

"No," I replied, trying to look very serious. "I have a wife and twelve children.

I realised that this answer immediately made me an uninteresting object.

It was my intention to follow the route along the Indus River, the Jumma and the Ganges through India; but the execution of this project was subject to the information I could obtain in Karachi, from the competent British authorities, about the possibility of landing in Bawalpur, Delhi and Benares. However, Commander Hicks could not give me exhaustive information on the subject. He only told me that in the current season that route was inadvisable because of the frequent sandstorms, which were of great extent and could completely block, for several kilometres, the visibility of the land from above. In addition, the rivers were in flood due to the thaw, and were dangerous due to the strength of the current and the abundance of the floating material dragged along.

He could not tell me anything about the possibility of landing in the cities I had chosen, because in India seaplanes were not used, but only land aircraft.

To get more reliable news, I would have had to wait a long time. But I did not want to prolong the stop, and therefore decided to take the Bombay-Cocanada route, where,in case I decided to use that route, I had sent supplies.

In Karachi it was oppressively hot, but in the hotels it was quite good, because to mitigate the heat, the beds were between the current of opposite windows and under a

large fan. In this way it was possible to sleep without suffering excessively from the heat. Instead, we suffered from the uninterrupted music of the fan; but we, after a day's work, would have slept even among an orchestra of cannonballs.

May 7 arrive, May 8 depart Karachi

On the evening of May 7, the work was complete. At sunset we left Manora after putting the aircraft back in the water. In the twilight of twilight, “Gennariello”, cleaned and polished, looked like a thoroughbred steed ready for the race. It seemed to me that he too had a soul and understood that hard effort was required of him. Now it floated again, swaying slightly in the evening breeze; in spite of the darkness, the colours of Italy could be distinguished on the tail, which it was my task to bring honourably to the goal. The goal was distant, the beginnings had been rough. But the more difficulties tended to bar my way, the more determined I was to overcome them.

I had left to prove a thesis; If I had not succeeded in my purpose, the truth of what I maintained would have fallen with me, for those who fail are always wrong.

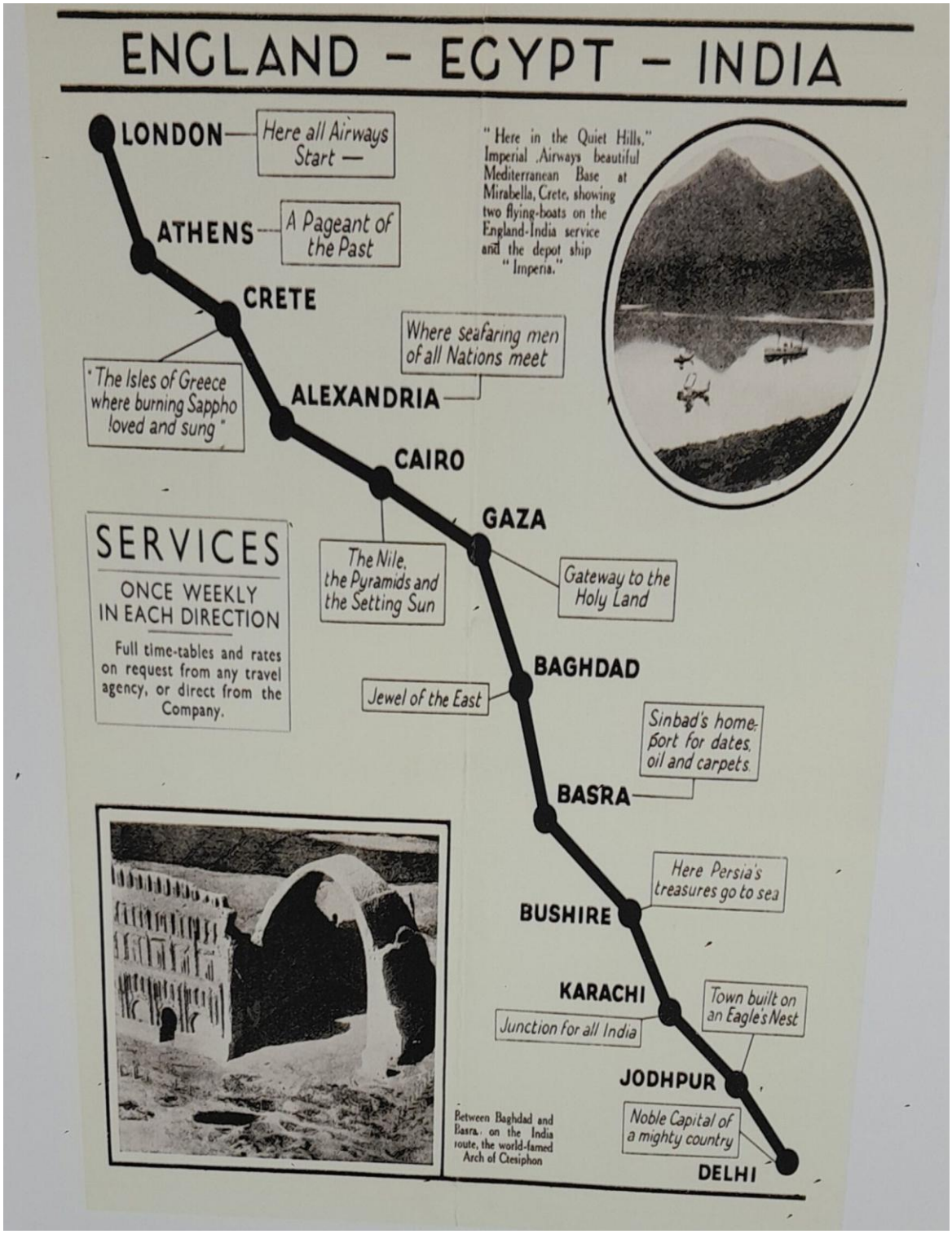
On May 8, early in the morning, we left Karachi. The captain of that port, an excellent sailor, very kindly took the helm of the motorboat, which towed the aircraft in the stretch of water chosen for take-off.

It was hardly ideal, for there were many shoals here and there marked by poles not visible from a distance, and although there was enough space to put the aircraft on the “step” against the wind, it was then necessary to make a conversion of about 90° to starboard, even before being in flight[7].

I had loaded up with full fuel, because the stage from Karachi to Bombay was 900 km long and unfavourable winds were also expected; which made the take-off longer and more delicate.

Fortunately, the manoeuvre was successful; but it was very difficult, especially in getting the aircraft to the “step”. It was 11 o'clock when we left.

[7] This is a terrifyingly dangerous manouevre, unthinkable to any modern seaplane pilot. He did it several times, often in appalling weather. See pages 28, 71, 77, 113,124. 146 and 172 for events like this.

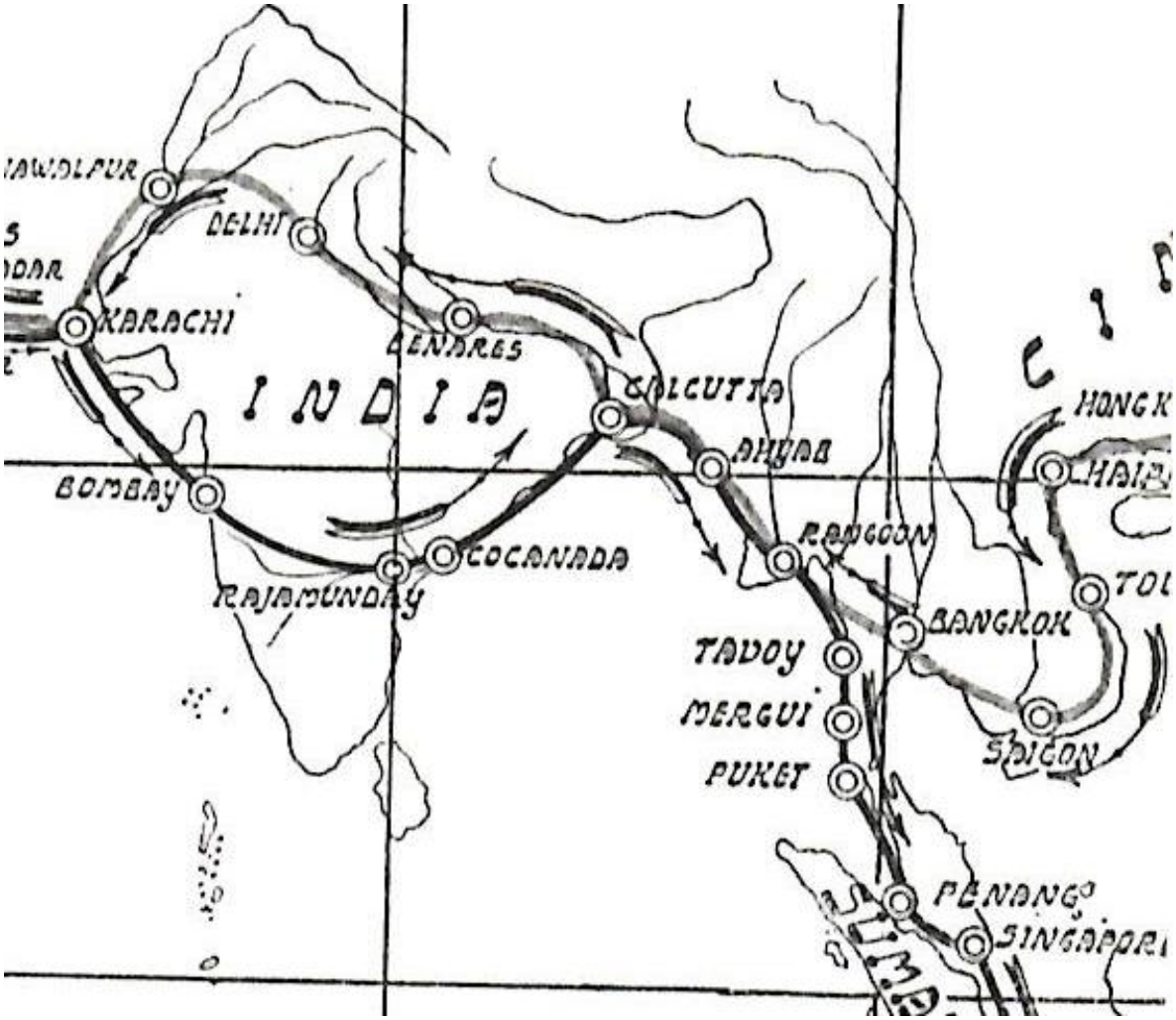


1925 Imperial Airways advertisement.

The navigation from Karachi to Bombay was difficult, The route along the coast was not direct; and I, to make it quicker, had taken a short cut over the ground. I suddenly found myself between dark clouds charged with electricity. I often changed altitude and course to avoid the most violent storms; and more than once I was forced to fly at an altitude of just 100 meters.

Powerful reddish lightning furrowed the air. The aircraft sometimes suffered such abrupt shocks that the engine suffered momentary stops due to a lack of air at the carburettor intakes. In addition, a strong wind from south-west made me deviate too far inland. I then changed my course to regain the coast, where I then found calm and good weather as far as Bombay.

At 3 pm I was on the Gulf of Cambay, and I left the coast, steering with the compass for an hour and a half on a wide sea.



Map 2: Karachi to Singapore

May 6: Bombay

At 5:17 we reached Bombay. I alighted near a small dock, floated in and approached a buoy to moor. I stopped the engine when I had the bow on the buoy, but a boat that was there, and from which I asked for help, could not grab the cable with which it was supposed to secure me to the buoy so, with the engine off, the aircraft was drawn by the wind and by the current to drift on the cliff. It was a rather exciting moment, because I feared some damage: we had to jump on the rocks and keep the aircraft away from them, until two or three motorboats came to haul us in tow.

The manoeuvre was long and laborious because the motorboats got in each other's way. One caught a cable in the propeller, another had a failure of the engine and was thrown by the wind against us. As if this were not enough, two tugboats full of compatriots and onlookers, who ran to applaud us, badly manoeuvred, also ended up among that hoax of ropes and motorboats.

The spectators mingled with the clamour and cursing that we and the sailors threw at each other in various languages, as is usual in such situations.

Only after a couple of hours of work, as God willed, we managed to put the aircraft safely and without damage, on the buoy.

We found a British air officer in Bombay, kindly placed at our disposal by the Air Force Command; however, I had the sad news that the gasoline had not yet arrived in Cocanada. This, moreover, did not surprise me, because at first I had decided to stop at Masulipatam, on the east coast of the Deccan to the SW of the mouth of the Godaveri, and only shortly before leaving Italy I had decided to descend at Cocanada, which was better for the landing of the aircraft. I had hastened to telegraph to have the petrol carried from one place to another; but, given the scarcity of communications, the precious liquid had not yet left. I immediately made arrangements with the Shell official, and again telegraphically ordered the gasoline to be shipped from Masulipatam to Cocanada by truck.

In the evening the Italian Consul introduced me to some members of the Yacht Club, which enjoys the reputation of being one of the best in India.

I confess in this connection that the organization of the English is unsurpassable. Even in the most remote country on earth, where people may live in tents, as soon as they arrive you can be sure that in a few days a club will be well stocked with whiskies and deck chairs.

"With the British, pay attention to etiquette! "said the Consul. "Woe betide anyone who shows up at the Club, after sunset, with the 'topee' on his head instead of the lobbia (bowler hat) which is compulsory at such hours. It would certainly be judged to be "outcast".

Really?

Imagine that some, when they have some commitment that keeps them from dawn to dusk, carry a second headdress, to be hoisted at the right time.

"Wouldn't a good straw hat or a panama hat be cooler, lighter and also more hygienic?"

"We agree. But a thoroughbred Englishman, in order to distinguish himself, will never cover his head with a straw hat or a panama, as is customary in South America".

At that moment a Hindu servant, with a conspicuous turban, placed the drinks we had asked for on our table with religious care.

"You see, these servants are handing down their trade from father to son. They belong to the specialized caste for the service of drinks. The whole social system of this immense

country, where about 250 million men live and speak about 300 different languages and dialects, is based on the division into castes: and today there are 2000 castes. Thus we have a caste of stalkers, farmers, water carriers, liquor sellers, porters, and even a caste of thieves. There are various castes of servants specialized in different services; and God forbid you not to ask a Hindu for a service that is not within the competence of his caste. He will look at her with an astonished air, as if she had proposed a sacrilege".

"And which would be the most chosen caste?"

"That of the Brahmins. They have various prerogatives such as the execution of sacrifices, the reading and teaching of the Vedas, the distribution and acceptance of gifts; and they have duties that are not light, such as continence, purity, patience, honesty, theological studies. But theory is one thing... practice is another..".

However, the English Government, with magnificent political intuition, holds these customs in the greatest respect, and leaves the greatest liberty to the Indians to follow their customs and traditions. Herein lies the secret of its strength, against which a feeling of revolt is stirred in vain, which is not widespread, because the castes of the humble, who are the predominant ones, would have everything to lose tomorrow and nothing to gain from an independence that would make them more exploited by the various Rajahs who govern the regions of India.

May 9:delay in Bombay

The following day, May 9, we had a very busy morning. It was necessary to look for some spare parts for the engine, which I had sent to Bombay. They must have been in a box in storage at the Customs. After quite a few searches, I finally manage to get them and collect some necessary springs and spark plugs. This took a lot of time, but I wanted to try to leave anyway, although it was a little late. We went on board. Outside the port there was rough seas. While towing the aircraft to a suitable take-off point, the tow cable broke. This increased the delay. It would have been madness to leave to get to night. With great reluctance I returned to the anchorage.

I took advantage of the free afternoon to take a ride around Bombay. I was truly amazed at the great development of the city and the magnificent promenades and streets that the English have built everywhere. Villas, gardens, picturesque houses and cheerful parks everywhere. The gulf is fantastic and superb, where steamers and sailing ships and a thousand boats of all kinds swarm.

We also went to the famous gardens of Malabar Hill, where I saw the Towers of Silence, of which I had heard so much. They are cyclopean constructions, bare walls that end at the top with a terrace. Clouds of crows flutter over them.

"The Parsees," said the consul, who acted as my guide, "throw the corpses of their dead on these towers, continuing an ancient religious custom of theirs, which goes back to the most remote times, and which they imported from Persia when they were driven out

of it by the Arab incursions. The corpses are in a short time completely stripped of their flesh by crows and vultures. Look at how many there are!"

"There are thousands!" Of course they don't die of hunger!

At that moment some Parsee (alive and in excellent health) were passing by.

"Do you see how they are dressed? From the waist up they have more or less adopted the European dress, while from the waist down they have remained faithful to their traditional costume, which is that kind of towel that flutters their bare legs. Look how funny their headdress is!

In fact, they wore a kind of turban, without flaps, of black waxed cloth.

"These are very intelligent. Parsees have in their hands a good part of the wealth and industry of Bombay. They also have strange rites: the children, for example, when they reach the age of seven, are all subjected to a ceremony that recalls the confirmation of the Catholic rite, and during which they are sprinkled with cow urine!.

We returned to the city when the sun was already setting. The streets of Bombay presented a strange aspect, for the homeless (and there are thousands of them in Bombay) were at that hour, on the pavements of the streets, with a mat, on which they slept peacefully and perfectly aligned, side by side, quite careless and insensible to the turbulent traffic of the city.

While we were watching that spectacle, we almost ran over a cow with our car, which was quietly wandering the streets.

"Woe to us," said the consul, "if we had run over her: here, these beasts are sacred: if you scratch them, there is a danger of being lynched. You see, these cows roam freely everywhere, even in the busiest streets, and sometimes even enter the shops, but no one dares to molest them. The British respect this local custom, in accordance with their traditional policy".

That evening we were hosted at the "Leon d'Oro", a small club that had just been founded, where the few Italians in Bombay meet from time to time. We were welcomed with great cordiality and sympathy. The club's restaurant was not yet fully furnished, and was provisionally supplied with an assortment of glass and porcelain that one of the members, a representative of a crockery house, had made available. I am not going to complain about the strange appearance that the table had. To top it all off, the most drunken people had liquor glasses, which condemned them to continuous elbow gymnastics.

May 10 depart Bombay

On May 10, at 8 am, we started the engine. Not the slightest breath of wind, and a sultry heat. Before leaving, we were greeted by the Consul and the senior English aviator. The latter did not share our confidence in the success of the Deccan crossing, from the East to the West coast, which had not yet been attempted by seaplanes; and, while wishing us well, he looked at us with a certain air of pity and perhaps even sadness, thinking that

it would be his turn to embark on a journey into the jungle, in search of our mortal remains.

The take-off was very difficult because the aircraft was fully loaded. This was the longest stage of the entire journey: 1150 km. above ground, which bordered on the limit of range of the aircraft. So there was little to joke about!

But I was confident that the winds would be favourable, since the West Monsoon season had already begun. As soon as I took off, I immediately set course for the chain of mountains that stretches on the west coast of the Deccan, and deviated slightly further north of the course, to bring myself as soon as possible into sight of the river Godaveri, which has its source just north of Bombay, and which I hoped would still have enough water for a possible descent on the way.

In fact, after an hour and a half (my altitude was about 2000 meters), I found myself in sight of the river; but I was disappointed because, given the season, the Godaverì was nothing but a rivulet, and moreover its bed appeared stony and bumpy.

At 10.25 we were at the confluence with the Purno, and I noticed that we were going slowly. Later the weather failed. In a dense nebulosity, strong swirls shook the aircraft, causing it to undergo continuous jumps. I increased the engine rpm and climbed to about 2600 meters.

At 12 noon the weather worsened: I find the following notes in my journal: *Extremely strong headwind, dancing, a lot of rain, there is no water in the Godaveri! As you go on, the bed becomes wide and rocky".*

I then began to doubt whether I could get to Cocanada. On examining the map carefully, it seemed almost convenient to go and land in the lake of Sakhal, near which a railway line was marked. But then I thought that perhaps towards the mouth of the Godaveri I would find more water, and therefore I would be able to alight and control the consumption of oil and gasoline.

Meanwhile, the weather was getting worse and worse. About fourteen o'clock we passed by a very black cloud, from which lightning and torrents of water emanated, hiding the whole horizon.

The land appeared very varied: desolate steppes, forests, swampy basins, woods of coconuts, bamboo and palm trees. Sometimes small pools of water could also be seen, remains of reservoirs used for irrigation.

I was seeking to land, as soon as I could. It was 3 pm We had been flying for about seven hours. There were still 180 kilometres to go to get to Cocanada, It was prudent to check the consumption of oil and gasoline, given that in many places, both because of bad weather and to climb more, I had kept the engine at a higher speed than the economic one. I saw marked on the map a tramway line, which from Dummaguden turned to the south. I thought that I could find petrol and oil there; and I promised myself to alight there, if I had the chance. At 3.15 pm I was above Dummaguden. It had a stretch, about

300 meters long and 40 to 60 meters wide in slight curves, where it was possible to alight with due care.

Even further south, the weather appeared darker, due to a strong thunderstorm.

I therefore decided to alight, and landed on the branch of the river that I have described.

Gasoline hunt at Dummaguden

As soon as I dropped anchor, the shore was filled with a crowd of indigenous people, curious and amazed. They had never seen an aeroplane either up close or far away.

I went ashore and try in vain to explain myself to them: they spoke only Hindustan. But here is one of them, small and muscular, advancing from the group. Thank God, he stammers a few words of English. He is happy to be assumed to the dignity of interpreter, and whenever I manage to make myself understood I see his very mobile eyes light up with vivid light. I ask him where the tram station is, in the hope of finding someone there with whom I can explain myself better. But the line, unfortunately, only existed on my paper. I then ask for gasoline, and he leads me to a grocer's closet. He had only oil for enlightenment. I ask again, more with gestures than with words, if there is no car owner in the country. It seems so! Early in the morning, I'll also find some petrol!

I set off with my interpreter guide, all hopeful, always followed by a queue of Hindus large and small, who crowd around me, looking at me like a rare beast and blowing their not exactly perfumed breath on my face.

They are all half-naked, with a complexion very close to black; they wear rings on their ears and their faces are decorated with some signs of red paint.

I am forced to push with my elbows to make my way. Arrived at the garage, which is a simple canopy of leaves, my guide presents me with the car, an old battered motorcycle. Disappointment! The supply of petrol amounts to about 12 litres, and I would need a hundred instead!

I continued to turn to find some oil. In a bazaar, where they sell pharmaceutical items, I found and bought 40 quart-litre bottles of castor oil, naturally destined for a very different use.

With this material I return on board, where I verify that we still have enough fuel for an hour of flight. I put the oil in the tank, but I am very worried because the petrol is insufficient to get to Coconada and I don't know if and where to alight first.

Suddenly I see on the shore a white lady, rather old, who makes big greetings. Back to land. She is an Australian missionary, the only white woman in the country. She informs me that at Rajahmundry, towards the mouth of the Godaveri River, I shall probably find some petrol from cars, and enough water to alight .

At 4.45 pm I start the engine; I risk breaking a wing against the shore, while I am going to take a good position for the start; but the aircraft is very light, and I take off easily in curves.

It begins to rain; the water accompanies us as far as Rajahmundry, where I see with pleasure that the aircraft can be conveniently moored. At 5.50 pm, when the sun is already setting, I land by the railway bridge, sinking my anchor.

Our arrival arouses great emotion in the country, where they have never seen a flying machine. While I float along the bank, the natives rush; and gesticulating and shouting, they form a strange procession on the ground that marches hand in hand with the apparition. But in vain I look among them for a mushroom hat, which denotes the presence of an Englishman.

Meanwhile many boats move away from the shore, and in a short time we are surrounded by an enormous multitude of large and small boats, manoeuvred by incapable sailors, who seriously endanger the aircraft.

Ernesto and I take turns shouting to keep them at a distance. In vain! Finally I see salvation in a European, in short trousers and a white shirt. He beckons to me from the ground. So I leave Ernesto struggling with the crowd of spectators and go to him. He was an engineer, Swiss, and has been in Rajahmundry for about a year to assemble a paper mill. He sends me a policeman from the local authorities to watch the aircraft, and I go to the telegraph to announce my unexpected stop.

It is already night.

Back on board, Ernesto had already performed the night maintenance to the engine.

The boats have not decreased. With large headlights they continue to turn around the aircraft; but we finally manage to keep them at a slightly more respectful distance.

In the meantime, we can organize the night police service. We place the policeman on the aircraft: he is a Hindu dressed like all the others, who has no special badge, but only a black silk umbrella for his only weapon. We put him sitting on one wing, with his feet on the side float, where he remains crouching, always very afraid to move, because we have told him that the slightest movement is enough to produce a failure of the wings.

His raincoat was hooked to the wing spars. But the poor devil has a lot to do against the wind gusts, and, unable to move, he vents himself by shouting at the top of his lungs and spitting to give greater strength to his curses.

Late in the evening, at last a little calmer on the aircraft's urging, I accepted the engineer’s invitation and went to his house. I naturally passed first to the Club, where I also met some gentlemen of the Brahmin race, correct, intelligent and cultured. They had perfectly assimilated English customs and habits. That evening we were hosted by the engineer and we were kindly allowed to go to the table in our work clothes.

He told me that he had only attended to stay here a few months to build the paper mill. “But things go on for a long time and I've been here for over a year. I already feel weakened by the humid, muggy and oppressive climate”.

“Of which you,” interjected the engineer’s wife, “have tasted the delights to-day..”.

“Rajahmundry “continues our guest “is one of the most important propaganda centres of Gandhism”.

“And what is the basis of Gandhism?”{

“Mahatma Gandhi's proselytes are many and passionate. After all, it is undeniable that the British have organized and made fruitful the resources of the country, improving the general conditions of life. Gandhiism is against the English more out of racial and religious antipathy than in reaction to political domination. Everyone basically recognizes that if the British were to leave, all India would be ruined”.

That evening they gave me the news that some car petrol had been scraped together in the village, just as much as we would need the next morning for the last 100 kilometres that separated us from Cocanada.

At night I slept like a badger. after the many vicissitudes of the day, and in the morning in good time we went on board.

The policeman, or watchman, was still there, and his raincoat swayed gracefully hanging by the handle from a cross of the wings.

In addition to the boats, which swarmed around the aircraft, we were surrounded by an infinity of completely naked natives, who, astride a strange float in the shape of a slice of orange, using their hands as a paddle, circled us, admiring.

Ernesto told me that those floats were used by the natives especially to ferry the river and recover, to sell them, the trunks of trees carried by the current.

After half an hour of prayers, screams and throwing away the fruit leftovers on board, I managed to find a space to take off, and by 8:15 I was finally in the air. The carburettors, with the car gasoline I had bought, were bad, the engine missed a few strokes, and so the few minutes of flight it took me to reach Cocanada were quite thorny.

May 10: Cocoanda

At 8.45 am we alighted into the waters of Cocanada. I land in the natural inlet that forms its port, and taxy up the channel that serves as a shelter for small boats. But I had not yet stopped the engine, when a crowd of sailing boats rushed towards me, to my great concern. Here too we had to shout long and loudly, so that the sailing ships would not get too close to the aircraft.

Fortunately they were good sailors on board, so that we were soon somewhat reassured.

The crossing of the Deccan by seaplane, defined by some as a crazy attempt, had been carried out despite the aggravation of adverse weather conditions!

An aeroplane had never been seen in Cocanada either. A religious toll in the Catholic church had to be interrupted, because the faithful had deserted the church to the roar of my engine, and the officiating priest also rushed to the square to admire the spectacle, still wearing the vestments of the service.

The police boats circling the aircraft were constantly fending off the boats of the curious. One of them went sank in into the commotion.

The schools were closed and the children were led with their tutors to see the strange car. I met on land a very old European gentleman, who had been stationed for many years in Cocanada, who told me all his gratitude because I had given him the joy of seeing, before dying, a flying machine, which he had so often dreamed in vain of admiring up close.

I would have liked to leave that same day. The petrol had arrived, a few hours ago, yes, but it had arrived. And this was the essential.

We really didn't waste time: the engine was washed with oil, the spark plugs were cleaned, the valves were adjusted.

The onlookers did everything they could to help us, but instead added to the confusion. A Dominican friar with a flowing beard helped us with the moorings; a schoolteacher helped clean the engine; everyone was busy, while some rascals climbed into the hull and then dived into the water, jumping from the deck.

At 12.30 I taxied out along the canal. The hot air makes take-off difficult. with the engine. We are 41 minutes in the shade. The high temperature causes a rarefaction of the air, which greatly hinders take-off. We spent three hours in vain for the manoeuvre, and we return to land, again at the Asiatic Petroleum Company's depot. We are in pitiful conditions, due to the heat, sweat and fatigue.

After being kindly hosted by the employees of the Asiatic Petroleum Company, we go to our accommodations for a short siesta. But it was also too short.

I had scarcely slept a wink when I was awakened by the sound of doors slamming violently, trees rustling, people running and shouting. A few unsecured tiles fly down from the roofs, falling with a crash. The water comes down in showers.

The sun, not far bright, is now hidden by dark black clouds, illuminated in flashes by the vivid glow of electric discharges.

Very worried about the aircraft, I put on my jacket and pants as best I could and rushed to the canal.

The aircraft came dangerously close to the ground. Helped by some natives, we kept the aircraft in the water. It was a very difficult half hour. Meanwhile, the storm passes over us, flooding us and hitting us with harsh and biting gusts of wind.

But after a few minutes, almost by magic, the clouds disappear, calm returns, the sun returns. and an iridescent rainbow arches over the sky. Towards the west we see the storm receding with its black cloud, while the dark and thunderous echo of thunder still reaches our ears.

It is the classic tropical storm.

A Dominican priest who came to the site tells me that such storms occur almost daily in this season. And it was in one of them that I had been caught in flight the previous day.

May 12 to Calcutta and onwards

On May 12, at 7 am, I get towed out of the canal. In order not to have any problems, I had spread the word that I would leave at 10. Except for a few curious attempts and early risers, the population sleeps peacefully. At 8 am I was in flight. The weather is quite good; I follow the coast, cut above land about 20 kilometres from the coast at the mouth of the Delhi. At noon the weather becomes stormy and the air very rough. I try to find a quieter area, taking altitude at 2000 meters. At 6.45 pm I am in sight of Calcutta, and at 7 pm I will land at the assigned place, at the Bally pier, in the Hooghly river.

My stop in Calcutta was a few hours.

Many of the Italian Colony had gone inland to cooler places, as in summer Calcutta enjoys a reputation for being one of the hottest cities in the world. During the day, the atmosphere is so sultry and suffocating that it almost paralyses city life. Nor is it easy to ask for refreshment from the cool sea waters, because the city is far from the sea.

It is true that a few years ago there was an attempt to build a grandiose bathing establishment on the nearest beach with all the comforts of a modern and elegant station. But it was necessary to interrupt the work and abandon the enterprise due to an inconvenience that does not occur in our countries. During the work it became evident that the chosen area was much appreciated by tigers, and was so infested with them, that it was not considered possible to ensure the safety of future bathers. So the establishment was left in the lurch.

After all, some time earlier the Italian Consul, coming down by car from Darjeeling, had been forced to stop because a tiger was quietly crossing the main road. The tiger and the car stopped, and everyone can imagine how terrified were the day-trippers, who had not even a penknife in their pockets. Then the tiger, after having peacefully considered the situation for a few moments, went quietly off on his own business, and the car was able to go on.

If it is easy to meet tigers in the countryside, snakes are often found even in the city. Sometimes it happens, even in the very busy streets, to see them on the ground crushed by passing cars. It is said of a married couple who found “Cobra Capello” (with a bite he kills a man in two minutes) in the double bed! Fortunately, with a thin and flexible stick you can kill these reptiles very easily, which make victims especially among the natives, who go barefoot.

Near the rivers there is also the unpleasant presence of crocodiles; and the British aviators had the forethought to warn me to watch out. We would have had, it is true, the posthumous consolation of their tears, because, according to what they say, the crocodile first eats man and then mourns him.

That night I slept only three hours, not because I thought of crocodiles, but because I passed the evening between a banquet and a ball, from which I wisely retired at midnight.

The aircraft was very far from the city centre, and therefore, wanting to leave early, I had to start at three in the morning.

But the preparations went on for a long time, and it was not until 7 o'clock that I was in the air. Very difficult stages now awaited me as far as Singapore.

The British Air Force Command, which had moved with the Government from Calcutta to Simla, as always in the hot months, had warned me that the West Monsoons had already settled in and that I would find between Akyab and Penang continuous rains and many storms, which are often very violent.

A cyclone in the Bay of Bengal was advancing slowly from South to North, and had worsened the weather conditions more than the bad season, not yet advanced, suggested. This was the most serious consequence of the lost days in Chahbar and in Karachi. According to my schedule, I should have been in Calcutta a week earlier; and it would then have been easier to continue, due to the better weather conditions.

“We'll see,” I thought, as I flew over the Ganges delta, which stretches for almost 200 kilometres.

Although there was a lot of water everywhere, it was not advisable to alight , as the various branches of the delta had limited depth due to the numerous and invisible sandbanks. Once the aircraft had alighted, it would not have been easy to go ashore. The “jungle” that covers the entire soil of the delta is infested with tigers, and the waters of the river are full of crocodiles. If, unfortunately, we had been forced to dismount, we had managed to avoid the crocodiles, we would then have to deal with the tigers.

But all these were and remained hypotheses, because the engine ran admirably at a regular and precise pace.

At 8 o'clock I left the coast, and headed by the compass to Akyab. The weather, good at first, became somewhat nebulous after an hour, so that I saw the land beyond the gulf again, much later than I had calculated. At 10.45 I was in sight of Akyab, and at 11 I landed near the city.

There was no one waiting for me, because no one knew of my arrival. After a quarter of an hour of useless waiting, seeing that no one was taking care of me, I floated towards a building, which I supposed to be, as it was, the harbour master's office.

Then a gentleman came on board, the depot of petrol supplies, who advised me to return to where I had alighted before, offering to tow me with his boat.

Having secured the aircraft, I went ashore to look for my oil, which no one could tell me where it was. Eventually we found it, in a food warehouse. So around 2 pm I was able to bring supplies on board.

I had seen on the ground the tail of MacLaren's[8] aircraft, which, the previous year, had attempted to fly around the world and which, in Akyab, had lost its aircraft in an accident.

Misfortune befell the brave and sympathetic aviator, whom I had the opportunity to meet first on his passage to Rome, and whom I then saw again in London during the period of preparation for my journey. I remember that, with regard to the difficulties encountered in taking off in very hot countries with the aircraft very hot, he said to me:

“Bring only twelve spark plugs as spare parts and a tuxedo as luggage:.

I tried to follow his advice, but I did not have the courage to reduce my ship's stores to such level. It is true that later I had to get rid of most of my stuff, throwing it into the sea to lighten the aircraft.

We then began refuelling. But the wind became cooler, and we soon had to stop working because of the disturbance that the short and breaking waves caused us.

I had to hurriedly send the rescue personnel back on board the boats, which I then had removed from the aircraft to avoid dangerous collisions. Refuelling could no longer be done in those conditions; if the wind and the sea cooled again, the aircraft would also be in a critical position. So I asked for a motor boat to tow us to a more sheltered place.

After some difficulty I managed to get a motorboat with which I took the aircraft in tow. This was not an easy operation for me, not yet having the necessary practice. The very strong current from the bow makes us move very slowly; The wind in the stern caused the aircraft to swerve and overwhelm so strongly that the tow cable breaks a couple of times. (He – attaches rope to the wings(?)) at the ends of the wings: although this would avoid violent overhangs, I fear for the torment that the wings would receive because of the sea. At last I make up my mind, the torment of the wings being less than I had supposed, the towing is carried out regularly.

We enter a small estuary about 10 kilometres away from the city. It is 8 in the evening when we manage to moor the aircraft; and since our departure from Calcutta we had eaten only a few eggs and fruits.

Our ordeals, however, are not over. The motorboat that towed us has to go back to the city. In the meantime, I need another one that will assist us in case of a sudden storm and that will facilitate our departure the following morning; therefore I also return to the city to procure it for me, and leave Ernesto on board to watch the aircraft.

On the landing I meet the English Resident and some ladies, returning from a “tennis” match. Comparing their fresh clothes and pleasant idleness to the sad condition in

[8] In 1924, Squadron Leader Archibald Stuart-MacLaren led a British Royal Air Force team in an attempt to circumnavigate the globe by air, The team, flying a Vickers Vulture biplane, a Mark VI variant with a single Napier engine. encountered problems including a crash in Burma. The planned flight was to start in England, travel eastward through Europe, Asia, and the Pacific, then cross North America, and finally return to Europe. Eventually, heavy fog forced pilot Plenderleith to make a forced sea landing in the Bering Sea, damaging the aircraft and ending their attempt.

which I find myself. I had hardly eaten since the previous evening and had been up since 3 o'clock in the morning. I cannot refrain from looking at them with a sense of envy and nostalgia.

After having a quick dinner and taking supplies for Ernesto, I go to look for a motorboat. There are none. We have to wait. We need to arm ourselves more and more with patience. I ask for a chair and there, on the quay of the Harbour Master's Office, I wait. Sopping wet, I wait three hours.

Around midnight finally a motorboat is found, and we leave. During the journey, which requires a watchful eye due to the numerous sandbanks difficult to feel in the dark night, we hear ourselves desperately called. It is a tugboat on dry land, asking for help. We go to free it and almost run aground too. It's one o'clock in the morning.

“To-morrow morning at high tide you will be afloat,” I say, leaving. “Enjoy!

‘Good night!”

When we reach the aircraft, I wake up Ernesto, who is sleeping on a wing, and, as best he can, dressed as we are, we spend the night on the hard benches of the motorboat, protected by a curtain. It's always drizzling, and we're numb from the moisture..

In the morning, early in the morning, with sore bones and the fatigue of those who have slept badly, we complete the refuelling, and at half past six we take off.

The weather is threatening. I set course along the coast and then cut overland, to go to reach, according to my program, the course of the Irrawaddy River. We pass over mountains covered with dense forests and all precipices and slopes, just the virgin land, which through the centuries no human foot has ever trodden.

I think that a descent on that forest would certainly not be welcome, because, even if you were able to place the aircraft on the trees without excessive damage, the passage is impassable; and besides, even if it were very practicable, I know that the forest is infested with tigers and teeming with snakes. But the engine runs wonderfully and inspires me with great confidence.

After passing the buttress of the mountain, beyond the watershed, I am in sight of the Irrawaddy. It is a very wide river open to navigation. But alas! A dark strip of clouds, which becomes denser and denser, covers it and soon removes it from my sight. I can't go under them, because, due to the heat, the temperature of the radiator water would rise too much. Above the clouds I head to the compass towards Rangoon; and when I presume to be near it, I take advantage of a gash in the clouds to pass underneath, finding myself in sight of a fertile, verdant and inhabited region. Gusts and rainfall do not allow me to admire the splendid spectacle.

I head south, and in a short time I see among the mist an expanse of houses and gardens scattered with ponds and on which some magnificent golden domes dominate: a faint single ray of sunshine illuminates the tall and sharp piles. It's a superb vision. I

make a wide tour and alight at 10.20 at the Monkey Point seaplane base of which they had told me, a small hangar which houses four aircrafts for the hydrographic service[9].

14? May Rangoon

I am received by the Italian Honorary Consul, a stocky and nice guy, and by the authorities of Rangoon;

Thanks to the seaplane base staff, very quick and practical, we quickly put the aircraft under cover in the hangar, and then we go to sleep: we really needed it after the hard night in Akyab!

The following day, the 15th of May, we tool advantage of the opportunity offered by the shelter in the hangar to take a look at the aircraft and the engine.

With the spare material, which I had sent to the place, the side float, damaged at Chahbar, was changed, the controls were rectified, a new coat of paint was given to the lower part of the hull and the engine was checked.

I also make some duty visits; I participate in a tea at the Gymkhana Club and a lunch at the Honorary Consul.

We were in Rangoon in the middle of the rainy season, and it was raining almost without respite. The climate was gloomy and oppressive due to the intense heat and strong humidity. The air was all infested with insects of all kinds and sizes. My own room at the Strand Hotel was teeming with them, I had to constantly defend myself from them. I filled the bath and in a few minutes the water was teeming with gnats and beetles of all kinds, which tried in vain to save themselves from death by drowning. I put on a shoe and more than quickly I had to retract my foot from it for having disturbed the rest of a cricket. I sat down at the table and had to defend the dishes from the assault of my winged competitors. My suitcases and my hats seemed to be their favourite refuge. In the early hours of the morning, then, a real struggle took place between them and the waiters of the hotel, who, armed with brooms, slaughtered them until they formed teeming and self-propelled heaps.

The abundance of water and the strong heat favoured every manifestation of life; and this explained the luxuriant and superb vegetation of Rangoon, and also explained the abundance of insects, which, if they could form the joy of the entymologists, certainly did not make that of passing travellers like myself.

I have never seen more beautiful parks and gardens than those in Rangoon. Here and there were small lakes full of inlets jagged in all directions, where agile sailing boats chased each other like white butterflies.

[9] I can find no reference to this facility anywhere: It seems to be a real pioneer. The other big news in Rangoon 1925 was the visit of Alan Cobham on February 6: he made a return trip from England.

A contemporary vista of Rangoon,

On the streets of Rangoon we saw the first hand-pulled buggies, widely used throughout the Far East. It should be noted that the appointees who pull these buggies belong to one of those castes in which the profession is handed down from father to son. I admired their endurance: they do kilometres and kilometres always running and without ever hinting at tiredness. And, as in cars the speed of the ride depends on the greater or lesser amount of gas that the engine receives, in these human engines it depends on the more or less abundant tip.

On the morning of May 16th I had an unpleasant news: Ernesto informed me that an exhaust valve of the tenth cylinder of the right row was slightly deformed, and this was due to the long runs made at too high temperatures.

We were thus forced to disassemble a pair of cylinders to change the valve. I then took the opportunity to check the other cylinders in the same row as well. Except for the aforementioned valve, the others were in excellent condition, as the local engineers also verified and admired. We also noticed a slight leak in the oil tank, and took advantage of the stop to repair it. In the evening this work was completed and the assembly work on the aircraft began. Ernesto was assisted by the station staff under the orders of Commander Camp, a very nice and hospitable gentleman.

And so I, who had already left the hotel, returned to it somewhat slowly, to the great surprise of those who had already said good-bye. In the hall, however, I made a strange acquaintance that relieved me of my bad mood. A French lady came to greet me, who was making a trip alone to India and Burma. She had already gone into the interior, of

which she told me very interesting stories. As you can see, she was not at all afraid of distances. This love of travel led her to be especially friends with the planes that crossed the world. In fact, she spoke to me with great sympathy about my predecessor, Pellettier D'Oisy[10], whom he had met the year before.

That same evening, while I was in my room, I received a tragic note: she begged me to assist her because she was on the verge of death. I rushed worried; but I saw at once that hers was only a crisis of loneliness; and I comforted her as best I could. He gradually distracted himself, and showed me some of his notes and photographs of his travels, which were indeed very interesting. She had bet on travelling all over India without speaking a word of English, but sometimes this reduced her to a bad start, as on that evening when she could not get eggs and potatoes brought to her room which were her evening nourishment (she was a vegetative). For this he blamed the stupidity of the hotel servants, who rushed excitedly, and listened in amazement to his apostrophes in the purest Parisian jargon.

She asked me if I would advise her to continue her journey to Australia or Africa.

"I would go to America," I replied.

Downstairs, in the hotel restaurant, I found two Englishmen of his, who proposed an Anglo-French-Italian "entente". But the lady was adamant, did not want to intervene and remained locked in her room.

Not even the following day I was able to leave, however, although the engine was ready around noon, the spark timing was not perfect. Ernesto hastened to make up for it, but by then it was too late. A violent storm also broke out: we hurried to bring the aircraft back to the hangar and also ran for cover. This caused great disappointment among the local journalists, who however told us philosophically that they were used to the false departures of my various predecessors of intercontinental flights.

Maybe it was the air of Rangoon...

I apologized for the fruitless trouble I had involuntarily caused them, and went back to the hotel.

18 May – departure from Rangoon

On 18 May it was finally possible to leave; but it was low tide when we put the boat into the sea, and I feared for the wooden slide, which in its last part, exposed to the water, was somewhat rotten.

Suddenly, in fact, due to the weight of the aircraft, the slide broke through and, as if this were not enough, the trolley that supports the aircraft also breaks. So the whole

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[10] *Capitaine* Georges Pelletier d'Oisy (1892–1953) was a French aviator and World War I ace. He attempted a circumnavigation of the world in 1924. Pelletier d'Oisy began his aviation career as a World War I flying ace credited with five aerial victories. On 24 April 1924, Pelletier d'Oisy and Adjutant Lucien Besin departed Paris eastbound in a Breguet 19.A.2 in an attempt to fly around the world. Their attempt ended when they crashed their aeroplane on a golf course in Shanghai, China on 20 May 1924. They had covered 10,580 miles (17,037 km) in 26 days.[1]

manoeuvre remained suspended to the great disappointment of the journalists, who hoped this time to see me leave in earnest.

The trolley and the slide had to be repaired, and this required three hours of work, at the end of which the aircraft could be placed in the water without any further inconvenience. I take off quite easily, passing the numerous boats that cross in the stretch of water, which gave the crews some excitement!

At 9 am I set course and left the coast, heading on compass course 120°.

I was in the clouds between 500 and 1500 meters. After an hour of navigation the weather became threatening; strong gusty wind, rain, low clouds almost touching the water.

First I try to pass under the clouds, but the aircraft is too buffeted by the whirlwinds; I redo altitude, and I find myself in full thunderstorm. Wanting to avoid a stronger storm, I head eastwards, where I can see more clearly. Due to the very strong wind I find myself in a few minutes above land at about 30 km from the coast, among dense clouds. At a certain point I saw a very high peak emerge between them and below me. I see from the maps that there are other very high mountains, hidden from my view by clouds so thick that it is difficult to navigate in the few clear areas. I decided to head inside them to reach the coast. In addition, I notice small irregularities in the engine that depend on the spark plugs. The situation was really unpleasant.

Inside the clouds the humidity is so thick that the instruments are covered with a veil of condensed water, the ends of the wings are scarcely visible, and it is difficult for me to keep the course.

Every now and then I find myself with a lot of banging and once I even end up making a complete tour of the horizon, because with a government that is too irregular the compass goes crazy, and it is difficult to keep the direction.

After half an hour of this painful situation, I come out of the clouds and reach the coast.

Breathe calmly!

I see down the estuary of a fairly wide river, and without delay I land in it to proceed to clean the spark plugs and wait for better weather conditions.

As soon as the engine stopped and the anchor sank, we are surprised by another hurricane, which however passes in a quarter of an hour; immediately afterwards curious boats of natives surround me on all sides, keeping, fortunately, at a respectful distance.

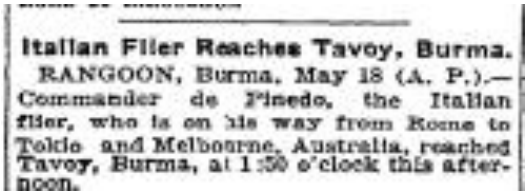
These Burmese have a very strange headdress: a large straw cone, with a wide base; More than a hat, it is an umbrella[11]. It is also clear from this that Burma is the land of rains.

[11] Paraqua?

Soaked with water, we proceed to clean the spark plugs; At 1.30 pm I dodge the boats which, to my surprise, obeyed me immediately, massed along the banks so as not to disturb me. You can see that I am among intelligent people.

Takeoff. The weather is still bad. I fly at about 500 meters above sea level, always in sight of the coast. Despite the very strong heat, the temperature of the radiator water remains within possible limits. At 2.45 pm cut on the ground, always in the rain, and at

18-19 May Tavoy



Italian Flier Reaches Tavoy, Burma.

RANGOON, Burma, May 18 (A. P.).—Commander de Pinedo, the Italian flier, who is on his way from Rome to Tokio and Melbourne, Australia, reached Tavoy, Burma, at 1:50 o'clock this afternoon.

Report in New York Times

15.50 I land in Tavoy in the river, anchoring at the first houses of the village.

The current is very strong and the anchor does not hold well; I make signals on the ground, asking for a boat to bring me a cable to send to the shore to better secure the aircraft. The boat comes; but after half an hour of complicated attempts, the current being still very strong, it ends up drifting, and the cable, which was supposed to serve to secure us, instead renders an excellent service to the boat, so held back by my aircraft that it always slowly rocks.

In the meantime a large tugboat arrives, with which I take the aircraft in front of the customs, where the violence of the current is minimal. The tugboat's anchor is very good, and holds well: I therefore decide to stay moored aft to it.

It rained continually. I want to refuel as quickly as possible. With the help of the sailors of the tugboat, we put some tents on the boat, and close to them we refuel with petrol and oil.

We have dinner on board, and we decide to sleep on the tugboat, which I did not trust to go ashore and leave the aircraft alone, in the difficult conditions in which it found itself. Especially since the current of the river, being near the estuary, depends on the tide; and during the change of the latter, the aircraft may run the risk of colliding with the tug.

“Commander! Commander!”

I wake up with a start and I have the idea that the aircraft has hit the tugboat, this being my concern, or that something more serious has happened. I therefore make, as I am, in “pyjamas”, a leap out of the small square where we sleep. In the fury and darkness I bang my head against the arch of the door.

I come out holding an expletive between my teeth, and I find myself in front of a boat, where there are two English ladies who speak Italian very well and who have come to take me to nothing less than dancing.

Frankly, I don't have the courage to accept the invitation, because I'm too tired and I don't want to move away from the aircraft, which needs to be closely monitored. All the more so since the tugboat that hosts us, at low tide, rests on the bottom, and at the beginning of high tide, as soon as it floats, it abruptly changes direction, with the danger that the aircraft will crash under the bulwarks.

We have a long dialogue, me in the pyjamas, from the tugboat, and the ladies in the "toilets" dancing in the boat, in the dimly oscillating light of a ship's light.

"We have been waiting for you for three days," they tell me. -Every day. To see you coming, we came here from our house, which is 30 kilometres away. Only today we did not come because it was raining, and we thought you would not come.

"Please excuse me for the delay," I tell them. "I did not know that Tavoy had such lovely ladies; otherwise I would have tried to be punctual.

One of them smiles mischievously. The other continues with insistent grace:

"Come and dance with us at the Club. There is a small party.

I am sorry. But we already had a party a few nights ago in Akyab, in the rain, on the velvety benches of a speedboat, and, you will understand, tonight we have to be good guys. Then there is "Gennariello" who does not want to be left alone.

"Then don't come

"No, really. I am very sorry about it. I will come when I return, if I come back...

"Oh! you will certainly return. You are so good. We love Italy, where we have been for many years. It is a country of enchantments. We are enthusiastic about your Mussolini. Tell him our admiration".

My President, I apologize if I did not carry out the delicate commission I received on my arrival. I do it now.

The next morning we received a small breakfast, sent to us by our kind night friends.

May 19: to Mergui (Myelk)

It was May 19. I put my head out of the portholes: it was raining heavily.

At 9 am the rain, which had hitherto been so heavy that it gave us no hope of being able to set out again, ceased, and the beginning of our lavish banquet was greeted by a faint ray of sunshine, which passed through the leaden blanket of clouds, arousing a slight hint of a rainbow.

We quickly devoured the spaghetti, then, without wasting time, we unmoored and set off. I took off easily at 2.45 pm, miraculously dodging a sandbank. Soon I found myself again among clouds. Exiting, I headed south, still in sight of the coast.

At 4 pm the weather has worsened a lot, and I am faced with a very extensive strong storm. I try to pass over the clouds, but in vain, which are too high. I try to get around the storm, but I can't find a way to break through either. The gusts are so violent and the downpours so violent that, not being able to predict the extent of the storm, considering also that the hour of sunset is approaching, I am persuaded that it is neither convenient nor prudent to continue. Then I calculate the course for Mergui, which I had passed shortly before and which, seen from above, had seemed to me a good place to alight ; I think I could find help and shelter there. At about 5.10 pm we landed in Mergui.

As usual, after the landing my tribulations begin, due to the very strong current. The anchor does not hold sufficiently, and the aircraft slowly but surely swerves against the bow of a steamer, so that I can already see “Gennariello” split in two.

I vigorously and desperately call a boat, and from this I have a rope secured to a tugboat that is at anchor in the bow of the steamer, thus avoiding the danger of a collision.

All this took place among a multitude of boats crowded with onlookers, gesticulating, shouting, cackling. One of those boats came to run over us under the wings, making some holes in the canvas with its oarlocks. I am not going to repeat the violent curses which we uttered!

Meanwhile, from aboard the tugboat, some sailors were hauling the rope. But, in doing so, they brought in our anchor rope, which was too short. I therefore gave orders that they stop. Instead, they understood the opposite; so the anchor cable stretched so tight that it broke the hook with which it was secured on board. Fortunately I had put a restraint on the cable so as not to lose it in case of breakage, and I therefore had time to entrust it to a boatman, instructing him to weigh anchor for me. I then moored myself aft of the tugboat, in a comparatively calmer area. Here there were new shouts, new busyness for the numerous boats that had rushed in, which crowded around the aircraft.

Strange machine, for them: never seen it before!

Another boat also ended up under the wings of the aircraft, making a few more holes in the canvas. In the chaos I fell overboard[12], and they lost the anchor, which became with that of the steamer; and it took two hours of patient work to be able to recover it.

It took two hours of patient work to be able to recover the anchor and its rope. But I was not happy with where the aircraft was moored, and as soon as the brought my anchor and cable back on board, to change the mooring place to another quieter.

I therefore asked for and obtained a motorboat, from which I had myself towed to a body of water farther from the city, where the current was less and where the boats of the curious could hardly reach.

The weather was so threatening that I decided, once again, to sleep on board the motorboat. At the end of the manoeuvre, it was already night, and we went to sleep dressed as we were and without even having dinner.

We were already resting when a French missionary and a Scottish engineer came on board. He was a man full of muscles and health. The missionary had a long flowing beard and a white canvas cassock. They brought us an invitation to the Governor's dinner, and it was not possible to decline it.

I looked up at the sky. Through the gaps in the clouds you could see the stars twinkle. The wind had ceased. I felt calm; the kind messengers insisted, and we went.

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[12] I do not absolutely guarantee this translation. The text is garbled at this point.

Having taken a good bath and put on our evening dress, which gave us the appearance of civilised men, we seemed to feel as fresh as if we had not spent about sixty hours of almost continuous work, and slept very little and badly. Soon, however, fatigue made itself felt again, and during lunch I happened several times to doze off and to be woken up, to my great dismay, by the waiter who served at the table.

After dinner, the Governor, very kind, kept a circle and conversation, but I could not take part in it because I was obliged to retire immediately, tired of fighting against the invisible and tenacious octopus of sleep.

The weather seemed to be calming, and I accepted the hospitality of the Scottish engineer instead of going back on board.

The next morning I thought it best to take on some more gasoline, given the excessive consumption I had made of it the previous day. It was car gasoline, the only one that was found in the village.

It rained again insistently.

“This is unlucky!” suddenly exclaimed the Scotsman who was with us.

I turned and saw the sea white with foam, the black sky, towards southwest, while showers of rain, even thicker, advanced rapidly. I immediately set about reinforcing the moorings, helped by the Scotsman, and prepared myself to receive the storm.

In a few minutes it was on us.

Unfortunately, the aircraft did not have the bow to the wind, which would have been less serious, but to the current, catching the wind at about 50° from the stern: a very dangerous thing. Furious gusts struck it violently under his wings, and at a stronger blow the leeward wing plunged into the water. I was afraid that the aircraft would turn upside down. I then clung with all my might to the windward wing with my Scottish friend, and

leaning out of the stern of the motorboat I managed to straighten the aircraft; but because of the strong waves, Herculean efforts had to be made to avoid a collision with the motorboat.

The slightest impact could have been fatal. producing irreparable damage. I spent half an hour of unspeakable anxiety and fatigue.

The stern of the boat was covered with very slippery waxed canvas. There was a moment when, in order not to fall into the water, I seized the flagpole, but this, which was fastened by means of a weak ferrule, boke off. I did not go into the water by a miracle, but fell on the floor, where the thin screws of the ferrule penetrated my flesh. At that moment I was so worried about the safety of my aircraft, that I didn't even notice it. All this always took place under torrential rain. The Scotsman with his extraordinary strength was of great help to me, and I think that I could not have managed it alone.

Fortunately, the storm lasted only forty minutes. As soon as it had passed, I decided to change anchorage again and to take an even more sheltered place, mooring the aircraft to a buoy that the Scotsman, director of the port works, kindly offered to let me settle.

The buoy was put in place, with such rapidity that I was amazed; the aircraft was taken to rearrange and, after a difficult manoeuvre. during which it almost crashed against the ground, it finally had a secure base.

It was 4 in the afternoon: I could finally breathe peacefully.

With less intensity, wind and rain lasted all day. but now there was nothing more to fear. I then repaired the mooring equipment, somewhat ruined by the various hardships we had suffered. Ernesto plugged the holes under his wings with some strips of canvas.

The weather was always threatening, and so I decided that evening to sleep on board the motorboat, near the aircraft, to be more ready to face any bad surprises during the night.

The Scotsman left us in the afternoon to go play football. Ferguhar Tait, as he was called, was a marvellous fibre of a man, not only for his physical strength, but also for his generous heart, and I shall always be grateful to him for the precious help he gave me in saving the aircraft. He took great care of us; He sent us food, put buoys and boats at our disposal, in short, did everything humanly possible to help not friends, but brothers.

May 21: to Phuket

Believed to be Francesco's view of Phuket

On May 21, at 7.30 am, greeted by the good Ferguhar, I set off and took off; and immediately I found myself in the rain. I went on for a while, but the water increased so much that I thought it advisable to stop. It was 9.30 when I landed near the estuary of a canal, on an uninhabited island: Campbell's Island.

It was raining heavily, and since we had nowhere to shelter, we stood under the wings, leaning against the uprights.

We lit a cigarette and waited philosophically for the rain to stop.

At first we started singing a few songs, old memories of when we were among the civilians, in the inhabited world. But then, as a result of the rain, or the loneliness, or the hunger that began to make itself felt, we also lost the desire to sing.

We then realised that we had forgotten to take with us, as we usually did, some food – usually hard-boiled eggs and biscuits.

We searched in vain inside the aircraft; we found nothing but a pineapple on which we immediately sank our teeth. But it took us badly, because shortly afterwards we were

assailed by persistent pains in the belly, which, combined with the monotony of the incessant rain, gave us the feeling of being even more miserable and shabby.

At 12.30 pm the rain subsided. I had had enough of Campbell's Island, and I decided to leave. A duck fluttered near us and I had to restrain the hunting fury of Ernesto, who still wanted to wait for it to come within range to shoot it down with his service pistol.

“Even if you shoot it,” I said, “how can you take it?” I don't recommend jumping into the water, because there may be crocodiles that haven't had breakfast yet, and you'd be a good mouthful.”

This argument convinced him. We then went back in thought to Otranto, to the time of the war, when sometimes at sunset, on quiet days, we would fly together in search of coots.

He was a splendid marksman: flying a few meters from the water, I raised flocks of coots and he fired guns from the bow, with an enthusiasm of St. Hubert; We always came home loaded with game.

We weighed anchor with a long and laborious manoeuvre, and, as soon as we were in motion, the tide being lower, we went ashore; but I managed to detach myself with the engine and take off anyway.

The diverting rain forces me to keep myself at a low altitude, 50 meters from the water, often 30, sometimes 10.

I follow the trees that draw the coast in all its ravines; but the situation is not very pleasant, because between the trees and the sea it is a muddy area of several hundred meters. If we alighted in there, even a short distance from the earth. we would suffer the torture of Tantalus, since it would not be possible to transit over that sea of mud. Continuation. At 1.15 pm I see Victoria Point, where there is an English Radio telegraphy facility, and where it would be possible to alight , but at that moment I see a slight clearing to the south, and I go on again.

But the clarity is illusory, and shortly afterwards the weather becomes so dark and the rain so thick that it cannot be seen more than 50 meters away.

I head towards the trees of the coast, so as not to lose sight of them. The water beats violently on the glass of the windshield. forcing me, in order to recognize the coast, to stick my head out from time to time; but the vision lasts only a few seconds, lost because of the speed the drops of water hit me on the face and blind me like sharp needles. The coast is irregular and very jagged, and it is necessary to be constantly vigilant to go around the tips and follow the inlets. A moment of distraction can cost me dearly.

And there is no other way to move forward. If I leave the coast and continue, guided by the compass, the deficient visibility could make me suddenly bump into an island, before I even have time to turn. Nor is it possible to alight , as I had done in the morning, because of the danger of the slums.

The engine, as if it had understood our critical situation, runs at a regular and precise pace. Since it has no capsize, it is hit full by the water, but behaves well all the same.

We are soaked to the bone. I feel it a trickle down my neck down the edge of my back, and it gives me an almost pleasant physical sensation because it helps to keep my sensibility more awake.

On other flights in the rain we had never happened to get wet like that!

Whoever wishes to realise the peculiar condition of my mind at that moment, let him imagine a marksman at the instant he lets off the shot: the faculties of his brain are all concentrated in the eye that follows the aim and in his nerves that must press the trigger with his finger.

More than seeing, my eyes tried to guess, through the thick veil of the water, the outline of the coast; my nerves worked only to make my hands and feet more ready to act on the steering wheel and the pedal board.

And this tension of mine had to be prolonged until that danger was overcome.

I often invoked in my heart the God who animates nature and its storms and who, by his mysterious wills, had created the circumstances that had led me there at that time, at that moment and towards that goal.

In my notes I find that the most acute phase lasted from 2 to 3 pm: an hour that seemed like a century to me.

Finally at 3 pm the coast begins to be distinguished and we begin to see even a glimpse of the horizon. The end!

Impetuous gusts greet us with a last angry goodbye. I turn back to gaze, and I cannot help but be surprised: black and leaden mounds of clouds hide the path travelled like a huge curtain. Ernesto also turns around. We exchange a look in which all our impressions are. We hardly believed we had managed to pass there.

Our flight now proceeds no longer in the rain; we are still somewhat tossed up to Phuket[13], where I land at 3.20 pm near a steamer, mooring myself to a buoy with a flag, which had evidently been prepared for us.

Because of the shallows, which extend offshore from the shore, the anchor place of the aircraft was far from the land; Waiting for a motorboat to come and take us over, we enjoyed a cigarette as perhaps never before.

The most critical point of the crossing from Italy to Melbourne was now a memory. Now I could count on reaching the goal without fail. From Phuket downwards, the weather, according to the forecast and the trend of the season. would get better and better.

Descending towards the Equator, the West Monsoons were now beginning to weaken and be less and less felt, until, in the Sunda Archipelago, we would have entered the area of the Trade Winds.

[13] Francesco spelt it as Puket

Finally a motorboat arrived. On board was a Siamese officer, dressed from the waist down with blue silk breeches and long stockings, according to the Siamese fashion. He announced to us that we were expected by the Governor. He had kindly asked us to stay in a small house on the seashore, since there were no hotels in the city.

I go to visit the Governor, who introduces me to his wife and daughter; the latter, who came out of a boarding school in Penang, speaks a little French, and acts as an interpreter. I have to put my signature on some albums: a sign that even the plagues of modern worldly civilisation were widespread up here.

The next day, waking up, I see a large eight-legged spider on the wall of the room: a bad omen, they say. In fact, the day was not really good. Supplies go on for a long time: it is very difficult to transport petrol and oil from the warehouses to the boats, because the low tide prevents them from docking on the shore. While we work on the refuelling, the Governor, many Europeans and thousands of curious people are around us. I do the full load, because it is my intention to travel the 1100 kilometres that separate me from Singapore in a single flight; but because of this, I end up losing one more day!

Ernesto gives a good oil wash to the engine, which was already beginning to rust due to the abundant rain taken during the journey, greases the controls and cleans the inside of the aircraft, very dirty and messy, as best he can.

As soon as I was ready, I tried to take off, but after many unsuccessful attempts, due to the heat and the overload, I decided to lighten up by draining gasoline. Before attempting the manoeuvre again, I return to the buoy. More time is lost because it is necessary to send the containers on the ground to put the unloaded gasoline. Meanwhile, I notice a leak in the oil tank.

I therefore postpone the departure until the next day to allow this repair work, which is carried out by the Ernesto, in the workshop of a tin mine made available to us, very kindly, by the director.

Great was the disappointment of those who had rushed around us to witness the spectacle of our departure. It should be noted in this connection that, although I have always avoided fixing a precise time, precisely so that my manoeuvres would not be jammed by the crowd of onlookers, at every departure, especially in countries where they had never seen a flying machine, avid spectators invariably ran who, as if they were attending a theatrical work, were in a bad mood if any inconvenience forced me to delay or even postpone my departure. They then felt deprived of the spectacle they expected, and not compensated for the time lost and the expense of coming to see it.

This sometimes took away a little of that absolute serenity, which I needed for the decisions to be made. I confess that it pained me to be obliged to delay or postpone; but I always strengthened myself and always preferred to be perhaps unexciting in respect of the public who make an untimely decision. In fact, I think that sometimes, if I had not delayed my departure, even if only for a few hours, I would certainly have found

myself in serious situations, which could have compromised my journey, or forced me to stop longer.

Forced, therefore, to stay, I went in the evening to the ”cottage” of the manager of the mine, where I met amiable Australian ladies, who entrusted me with various greetings for their friends in Melbourne.

May 22 to Penang

The following day, the oil tank was put back in place. At 9.30 am I took off easily, with the aircraft lighter due to the effect of the discharged gasoline; I took a tour of the city, as I had promised the Governor, and set sail for Penang.

After so many days of anxiety, I finally had a smooth and peaceful navigation.

I landed at noon in Penang, as the weather began to deteriorate again.

There is very little information about Tavoy and Mergui, and they must have been tiny settlements, quite undeveloped. Phuket was larger, and had been developed as a tin mining centre. But Penang, above, was a modern city.

The longer time at Penang was a good thing for Ernesto, because the oil tank, repaired in Phuket, was still leaking, and it had to be dismantled and welded again. This time a suitable copper reinforcement was applied to the bottom.

In the evening, the weather became stormy, and I thought it advisable to change anchorage. By means of a strong motorboat of the Harbour Master's Office I towed the aircraft right in front of the “hotel” where I was staying and which stood on the seashore. I could thus easily supervise the car from the window of my room.

Towards evening, when the work was finished, I took a drive through this wonderful island called the Ceylon of Malacca, but I could see very little because of the darkness

of the night. I only remember, as in a dream, that I crossed parks and gardens full of magnificent, luxuriant vegetation.

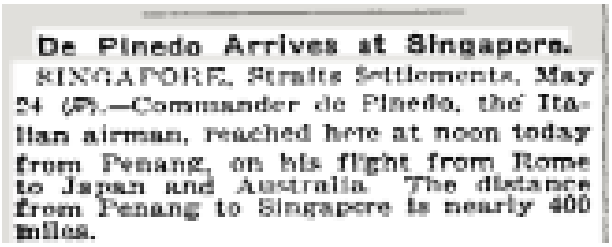
May 24 to Singapore

On May 24, at eight o'clock, I take off and set course for Singapore. The weather is good, and a picturesque landscape unfolds below us, along the coasts of the Malacca peninsula.

At 11.45 am, at the extreme end of the peninsula, we are also caught by a strong storm, which was supposed to be, God forbid, the last. I decrease the altitude to pass below it. Here too we receive a generous baptism of water.

At noon in the clouds I spot Singapore! My heart beats with joy: it was the extreme edge of the Asian continent, it was the end of the hardest part of my journey.

Other difficulties of another nature still awaited me. Thirteen thousand kilometres with various events had been travelled. I was missing about ten thousand to reach my first destination: Melbourne. The bad times were over. Long journeys were now to be made on the boundless solitude of the sea.



De Pinedo Arrives at Singapore.

SINGAPORE, Straits Settlements, May 24 (AP).—Commander de Pinedo, the Italian airman, reached here at noon today from Penang, on his flight from Rome to Japan and Australia. The distance from Penang to Singapore is nearly 400 miles.

The arrival was recorded in the New York Times, 25 May.

In the distance, towards the island of Sumatra, the storm raged - angry and tortuous lightning furrowed the black mounds of clouds.

On the other hand, it was a ray of sunshine over Singapore.

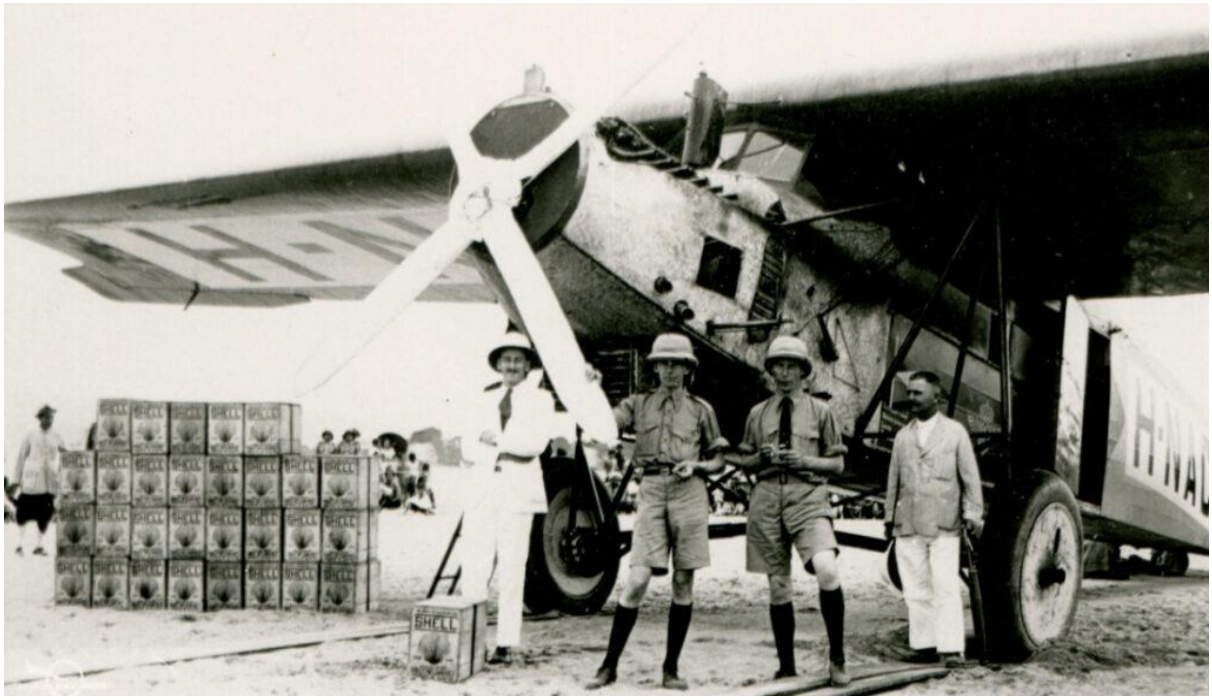
While I land, a sailing regatta takes place, I take a ride on the white sails, and I see the crews greeting me joyfully.

I moor in the Empire Dock, where the Lieutenant Governor with his family has come to greet us, together with the Consul and the few Italians of the colony.

It is the anniversary of our entry into the world war.

Singapore was a wealthy outpost of the British Empire.

*In the Sunda archipelago



The Netherlands East Indies was very air-minded. The Dutch were interested in di Pinedo's flight, and eager to assist. In November 1924 Van der Hoop (centre left) and Van Weerden Poelman (centre right) flew their Fokker F.VII H-NACC from Holland to the West Indies. The picture well illustrates the cases containing two four-gallon square drums of petrol, as supplied to de Pinedo.

From Singapore to Broome, Australia's first port, the route was to take place largely along the islands of Dutch dominion in the Sunda Archipelago, with a development of about 4200 kilometres in five stages, the first and last of which were Singapore-Batavia and Kupang.

Broome. about 1000 kilometres long each, and the other intermediate Batavia-Surabaya, Surabaya-Bima and Bima-Kupang, varying in length between 700 and 800 kilometres.

The Sunda Archipelago is dominated by the oceanic winds trade winds and monsoons, which alternate, creating only two distinct seasons: rainy and dry, with a constant average temperature of about 32° centigrade.

The dry season runs from April to October, in which period there are the South-East Trade Winds, dominant especially in the upper areas of the atmosphere and somewhat weak in the lower areas.

I could therefore count on a period of good time.

I was now passing through one of the most beautiful and richest regions in the world. but the anxiety of regaining the time lost in the crossing of India and Burma did not allow me to stay there for long.

May 25 Singapore to Batavia (Djakarta)[14]

The Netherlands East Indies was keen to establish air services: this map dates from 1921.

I left Singapore, with a full load of fuel, on May 25, at 8 am, and reached Batavia at 3 pm, after about seven hours of navigation.

At 9:10 I crossed the Equator. Naval custom dictates that the crossing of the equatorial line is celebrated with a small festival dedicated to Neptune. We limited ourselves to uncorking a very modest bottle of beer. with which we greeted our entry into the Southern Hemisphere.

I flew over the Unga Archipelago and the Bangka Strait, between Bangka Island and Sumatra Island. and for the rest of the route were out of sight of the coast. I had a few light showers and generally cloudy weather. but basically pretty good. Only a little wind from the south-east slowed my speed somewhat.

When I found myself on the so-called Thousand Islands, which are an infinity of small uninhabited rocks NW of Batavia, I was perfectly on course. I alighted to Tanjong Priok, which is the commercial port of Batavia. about ten kilometres from the city, and I had the aircraft sheltered in the “hangars” of the air force of the . Dutch Navy, which I find in the harbour.

The authorities, and the artists of an Italian opera company, which was in Batavia in those days for a course of performances, welcomed us.

We were covered with flowers and targeted by photographers.

[14] See map on page 78.

Our clothing was indeed very appropriate, because since Bombay, due to the intense heat (there was on land, in general, an average temperature between 35 and 40° centigrade), we had gotten into the habit of flying in shirt sleeves, also because the manoeuvre of starting the engine always made us very sweaty. On the flight, at an average altitude of 1000 meters, a temperature of about 25° was encountered. After a few minutes of flight, the ventilation due to the motion dried the clothes, and it was then fine; we always wore shirts of very light wool or silk. We also found the special cork helmet that the British Air Ministry had given us very useful, and which protected us very well from the sun, which, in the tropical climate, is considered deadly because it is rich in ultraviolet rays.

In Batavia I decided to stay put for a day to enable aircraft maintenance, because we would hove no opportunity to give the aircraft the usual maintenance, as we would have no access toa a hangar until Melbourne. All the spark plugs were changed for new ones, the old ones having already undergone about 90 hours of flight, and the propeller was repainted.

The Admiral Commander-in-Chief of the forces of the Navy stationed in the Dutch Indies was, together with all his employees, very generous and hospitable. I received from him some maps which I needed especially for the return route along the coast of New Guinea and through the Moluccas. He offered me with great courtesy and chivalrous spirit the support of his military units; an offer that, although I appreciated it very much, I declined, with thanks.

There was a small group of Italians in Batavia, who gave us great parties. Some even came from Bandoeng, which was in the interior of the island, about miles SE of Batavia. on a plateau surrounded by volcanoes; Bandoeng enjoys the reputation of being, due to its cool and healthy climate, a climatic place of the highest order.

I regretted not being able to stay any longer on this wonderful island, a gem of the Dutch colonial empire.

The inhabitants of Java, which now exceed thirty million, and increase annually by about 500,000 souls, are for the most part of the Malay race; They speak three different dialects, according to the social rank of the interlocutor.

The Europeans are very few and, for the most part, Dutch; of course, they dominate and direct the industries and commerce of the colony, which is the main source of the wealth of modern Holland.

Lucky country Holland! After having acquired this vast dominion from the Portuguese in the seventeenth century and having maintained it with various vicissitudes through the centuries, it now draws from it, with a modern and intelligent organization, raw materials and different products in very large quantities.

The value and importance of the Dutch colonial empire is such that it is in second place among the colonial dominions in the world, after the English. On a relative note, it is

even greater, considering that Holland has only seven million inhabitants, who enjoy such wealth and power without even having the burden of proportionate military expenditures!

The island of Java, like all the others in the Sunda Archipelago, where there are more than a hundred active volcanoes, is of volcanic origin. Mines of gold, copper, tin, iron, hard coal, springs of thermo-mineral waters abound everywhere. Heat and humidity favour every manifestation of life; and the most varied and numerous species of animals and plants are found on the island, which reach exceptional proportions for some families.

Crocodiles up to 8 or 10 meters long are not rare, very difficult to kill because they are almost invulnerable to ordinary rifle fire. It happens that. even if not seriously wounded at first, these monsters die after some time, because they are bled dry by the leeches that stick to the edge of the wounds. Voracious sharks infest the sea, so much so that to enjoy the coolness of the waters, special swimming pools for bathers have been built in Batavia.

The forests are infested with tigers, black panthers, wild cats and snakes such as pythons and boas. Scorpions and other poisonous insects, of all shapes and sizes, lurk in the daffodils and threaten the lives of passers-by. Very large bats and infinite varieties of birds populate the air.

A characteristic of the fauna of these islands is prevalence of by poisons: there are many varieties of fish and other very poisonous animals. The natives hunt and fish with poisons, and among their weapons is the famous “kriss”, a sort of poisoned dagger with an arched handle. In some tribes of Negro aborigines and Papuans of the interior, the accused of a crime or fault is subjected to a kind of summary judgment, which consists in making him swallow a cup of poison. If the patient rejects it, he is innocent; if, on the other hand, he dies, it is a sign that he was guilty.

But these people are disappearing. The Malays under the influence of Western civilisation improve and progress. Batavia is a modern and very civilised metropolis. There is even an Aeroclub in Batavia, which aims to increase air communications between the islands.

The president of the Aero Club, at a banquet in our honour, explained to me his plans for airlines, projects which had given rise to many lively discussions, especially about the aircraft to be adopted, whether aeroplanes or seaplanes. I told him that seaplanes were preferable, considering that the islands, being rich in inlets and ports, would have made it possible with little expense to ensure the landing of seaplanes almost everywhere, while there was not the same possibility using aeroplanes. I learned later that they had adhered to this advice.

27 May to Surabaya

On 26 May Ernesto did several tasks on the engine and hull to put the aircraft in order, before facing the passage of the Timor Sea.

Early on May 27 I went to Tanjong Priok, where the Dutch Admiral, the Consul and the whole Italian Colony had also gone to greet us.

At the start an accident occurred that almost had serious consequences. The contact throttle seemed to be at zero, but actually it had been moved by a few tenths of a millimetre, and therefore, as soon as Ernesto touched the propeller to give compression, the engine suddenly started; and if he had not been very quick to throw himself back and jump into the water, he might have been smashed to pieces by the propeller; instead, because of his presence of mind, he got away with only an involuntary and unwelcome bath.

Those who were around waiting to see us leave, impressed by what had happened, had not doubted that Ernesto had been injured; but when they saw him swimming like a fish, with his mushroom-like arms on his head, they rejoiced heartily.

Ernesto managed to hoist himself on board with some difficulty because of his wet clothes, and I was not at ease until he was completely dry.

I delayed my departure to allow Ernesto to change, and so at 12 noon I left Batavia, heading directly for Surabaya, cutting off the coast from time to time and from time to time passing off it.

The island of Java is truly a superb island. They could be seen from afar, crowned by clouds, very high chains of mountains and volcanoes, with a majestic appearance; among them the enormous cusp of the Selamat, an active volcano about 4000 meters high.

I passed over the channel between the island of Madura and Java and at 5 am I arrived in Surabaya, where I also found some Italians who gave us a cordial and festive welcome.

We moored at the seaplane base of the Dutch Navy, still under construction. From a motorboat that came to help us, we suddenly heard a voice with an exotic accent:

“Campanelli! Campanelli!”

“Do you have any friends here too? “I asked Ernesto in amazement.

He turned quickly and recognized in the one who had called him a colleague of his from the Dutch Air Force, whom he had befriended the previous year in Holland, on the occasion of our flying trip there. The world is small! I am not going to repeat the effusions of joy between those two, who met again in such a distant and unexpected place.

May 28: to Bima

I postponed loading the supplies until the following morning, May 28.

That morning I therefore took off a little late, around 11.35. After about an hour's flight I had a strange concern: I thought I felt the aircraft was too light and, since I had not personally checked the refuelling,

I wanted to alight to measure the amount of gasoline I had on board; I feared that if I moved too far away from Surabaya, the possible shortage of gasoline could become serious. We would then land close to a cove near the eastern end of the island of Java. But the verification reassured me. I immediately recovered.

I passed into sight of the island of Bali and later Lombok, leaving them on the right. The coast was covered with a low layer of white clouds, above which the very high cones of numerous volcanoes could be seen. The weather was excellent, disturbed only by a light storm, around 2 pm

I skirted the island of Sumbawa, on the coasts of which I spotted some sharks of enormous size from above, and at 4.50 pm I landed in Bima. a magnificent gulf about 5 kilometres long and 4 kilometres wide, open only to the north by a small narrow passage: a real ideal landing field for seaplanes and an excellent refuge for ships.

A radio telegram sent from Surabaya had mistakenly announced our arrival for noon, and since the morning a curious and patient crowd had poured onto the beach in expectation of the new spectacle.

The Smith flight take-off from Surabaya, 7 December 1919. The village inhabitants demolished their houses to make a matting runway. This was not at Bima, as Francesco records, but indicates the help given by NEI administrators – and the local inhabitants!

Of course, in Bima, a small town with very few Europeans, there were no hotels, and therefore we were kindly accommodated in the residence of the Malay Raja, who treated us with the greatest courtesy.

The Dutch Governor could hardly believe that he was being visited by civilised people, which rarely happened to him, and he welcomed us with great effusion.

He told us that a few years earlier the famous Australian aviator Ross Smith had passed by, on his way from London to Australia, with a large twin-engine aeroplane. The departure from the landing field had been difficult and exciting because of the mud in which the wheels of the aircraft sank, so much so that they had had to lay a kind of corridor of mats on which the plane had been able to run to take flight. I want to point out that these inconveniences cannot happen with seaplanes.

Meanwhile the heat began to decrease in intensity, so much so that at night it was possible to sleep without resorting to the fan.

The next day we got to work early to refuel the aircraft. A radio telegram from Kupang, our next stop, informed me that one of the oil cans from our supply had arrived there broken and half empty. So, for each good purpose, I brought on board another respectable one.

May 29: to Kupang

At 1 o'clock I left Bima, greeted by the whole population who, to see us leave, had crowded on the beach, as the previous day.

The weather was good and clear. I passed between Sumbawa and Sangeang Island, which has the shape of a huge cone of black basalt rocks coming out of the waters. I flew over other small islands between Sumbawa and Flores, and about 11 am, rounding Cape Kerita, which is SW of Flores, I set course at the compass for the Gulf of Kupang, flying for about three hours out of sight of land. I encountered a lot of wind from the SE, as the trade winds were then beginning to make themselves felt more strongly, and this hindered me somewhat.

Kupang is a small town, where the Dutch Governor of the Island of Timor resides. He also had at his disposal a small “yacht” which I, before landing , flew over, as I flew over the settlement.

The original caption for this photo from the Leiden University collection reads: Sailing vessel on its way to the flying boat Savoia S-16ter (right rear), named Gennariello, of the Italian aviator Francesco de Pinedo during a stopover at the roadstead of Kupang on his famous round trip from Italy via Melbourne…

At 2.30 pm I landed, but the wind in the roadstead had turned to the NE, and the sea hit us with strong heads. I understood that the port was not very reassuring, but there was nothing else to do, since the gasoline was there.

As soon as I stopped the engine, a motorboat came to us and took us on board the "yacht" named Gemma; and on it to the sound of the Royal March we were received by the Governor himself, who toasted our journey with a glass of champagne.

We did not expect so much from such a remote island, and we were very moved.

However, all that day, due to the rough sea, we could not work and we limited ourselves to reinforcing the mooring of the aircraft, asking the commander of the Gemma to give us a very strong anchor.

I decided to stay again the next day. considering that the refuelling could not be done on that day due to bad weather, and considering that an open sea crossing of about 1000

kilometres to Broome in Australia awaited us. before which a careful examination of the engine was prudent.

We were accommodated in a small hotel run by a Russian. Where in the world are there no Russians today?

Dinner was hurried and meagre. but it was not the fault of the Russian owner, who asked us for a firm apology if he was unable to offer us better dishes.

“You know,” he said, “our poor Malay cook was peacefully peeling potatoes in the garden, when you saw your noisy aeroplane pass over it, about ten yards high. Throw in the potatoes, run in, crying out to hell, the devil!” Now he is in bed.

“I am very sorry about it, especially since we too are now suffering the consequences.

“But this is nothing, because the poor thing was pregnant and…

“Understood; so that I have on my conscience the weight of a half-murder”.

‘The flying boat Savoia S-16ter, named Gennariello, of the Italian aviator Francesco de Pinedo during a stopover at the roadstead of Kupang on his famous round trip from Italy via Melbourne and Tokyo in 1925’ (Leiden University photo and caption)

Our guest was a doctor, who confirmed to me that many natives had fallen ill from the fright caused by my fluttering on the rooftops, and this was natural because no aircraft had ever been seen in Kupang, and many inhabitants were ignorant even of this new form of human progress.

On 30 May I had a bad night, because I dreamed that I had taken a wife! It was a bad omen for my trip to Australia.

Rising early, I saw with regret that the 1st had increased again from the previous day, and in those conditions it was not possible to get supplies. I then decided to change anchorage, moving about ten kilometres west of Kupang, where there was an area that offered shelter from the NE wind,

The Gem had left at dawn for Pelican Bay, about 20 kilometres from Kupang, to refuel a coal depot that was there.

In the village there were only boats and a few sailboats; only the Governor had access to a motorboat.

I went to the Governor, from whom I obtained a note inviting the commander of the Gemma to send me the motorboat to tow the seaplane. This note was sent by means of a sailing ship, which took three hours to reach its destination. So only in the afternoon did I manage to get the motorboat and, with a manoeuvre that lasted two hours, I was

able to take the aircraft to a calmer body of water, where we took on board the gasoline and oil that in the meantime he had sent to the place by means of a truck.

But it was late, and the work was finished in the moonlight. The body of water also lent itself to taking off.

I had been worried about the excessive consumption of oil in recent times, so much so that in Batavia, after seven hours of flight. I had arrived with just two litres in the tank, now, given the length of the stage I was about to undertake, I had decided to bring more reserve on board, and Ernesto, very ingeniously, managed to combine a connection between the pump that emptied the bilge water and the oil tank, so that we could put oil into the engine during the flight, without being forced to get off.

Contrary to my habit of reporting only the arrival in Italy, I sent a telegram to Rome that evening to warn of my departure, because I thought that if we got lost, at least someone would know.

I also received a telegram from Dili, which is the Portuguese capital of Timor, which reads as follows:

“The inhabitants and employees of the Government of Timor Dili congratulate you and are pleased to invite you to visit Dili via Broome”.

But the trip took me far off course, and I had to decline the invitation.

31 May to Broome

On May 31st we went on board early. It was half past three; the sun had not yet risen; We lost a great deal of time in going to the bay where the apparition was moored, for the Malay chauffeur, who had undertaken to take us, arrived very late. To our remarks he replied that he thought it stupid that we, having a whole day at our disposal, should go away so early!

In the twilight I saw several groups camped on the beach where the camera was: they gave me an affectionate “hurrah” of farewell.

It was the last goodbye of the old world!

The take-off was very long and not easy, as the aircraft was overloaded with petrol and oil. The wind came from the land, and I had to float for a long time to carry myself out to sea and have sufficient space.

I managed to put the aircraft on the “step” against the wind, but when this first part of the manoeuvre was completed, I was almost on the ground. I then had to make a turn of about 90° on the left, still on the “step”, and finally I was able to detach myself from the water.

My route was drawn directly to Cape Lévèque, which is the northern end of Dampier Land (Australia).

In order to have a precise setting of the of the compass, by which I had to steer, I steered exactly between the SW of Timor and the east end of the rock Usi, near the island of

Rotti. This alignment corresponded to the true route Kupang-Cape Leveque. So I calculated the compass course at 190°.But the fairly cool wind made me drift to starboard. By the light of my nose, having no special instruments, I calculated the drift at about 10°, so that in the end I steered a compass course of 180°. At 6.45 I set course. The sky was clear. The SE wind had lifted a little of the sea.

At 7.30 I lost sight of the last islands of the Archipelago from the stern, and found myself in the middle of the sea. Ernesto occasionally slowly pumped oil from the tank can, by means of the arrangement that he himself had made and which worked perfectly.

Passing over the sandbar named Ibernia Riff, I checked that there was no correction to be made to the course; a sign that the calculation of the drift was right.

At 8.30 I left two other rocks on the starboard side, West and East islands just emerging from the water. Shortly afterwards I noticed that the SE wind had somewhat diminished, and I then decreased the correction for the drift by 5°. I was flying about 500 meters above sea level, but at about 10 am, as the sun rose on the horizon and the air temperature increased, I brought the altitude to 800 meters to keep the temperature of the radiator in the right range.

The sea was deserted. Owing to the shoals, the coral reefs that here and there rise to the surface of the waters, and the incomplete soundings, the maritime navigation in that neighbourhood is not safe, and that no regular shipping line passes through it.

My eyes then rested on virgin waters to the human gaze. I felt like that, in that complete solitude, as if cut off from the rest of the earth. The homeland, my distant home, seemed to me to belong to another world. But in the meantime I felt the pride of finding myself in a situation such as few have ever had the good fortune to know. It was also strange that insignificant episodes of my past life should come back to my mind at that hour, and at the same time my brain should have a kind of lucidity unusual for everything that referred to the route.

The solitude and immensity of that sea, over which we were like an atom launched at the speed of 160 kilometres per hour from the old to the newest world, gave my spirit almost a sense of liberation from all the troubled struggles, snares, pettiness of life in the human consortium, preserving for it a singular serenity.

In the meantime my trusty Ernesto, having finished pumping the oil, gave a look of satisfaction at the engine, which had now become like his slave, quietly munching on some fruit, with the same carelessness as he would have done accompanying me on a trip between Naples and Capri.

At about ten o'clock I saw from the appearance of the surface of the sea that the wind from the SE had increased again, and then I again corrected my course to 180°.

At 10.45 I pass on the Adele rock, which was about 140 kilometres north of Cape Lévèque, Ernesto warns me that there is a water leak to the jacket of the right stern

cylinder. This causes me some concern; but I see that the gap is small, because the water temperature is maintained well: we can go on for a while longer.

At 11.45 I sighted a light strip of very low land on the bow, which almost merged with the horizon. After some time, as I approached, I checked the position and saw that we were exactly with the bow on Cape Leveque.

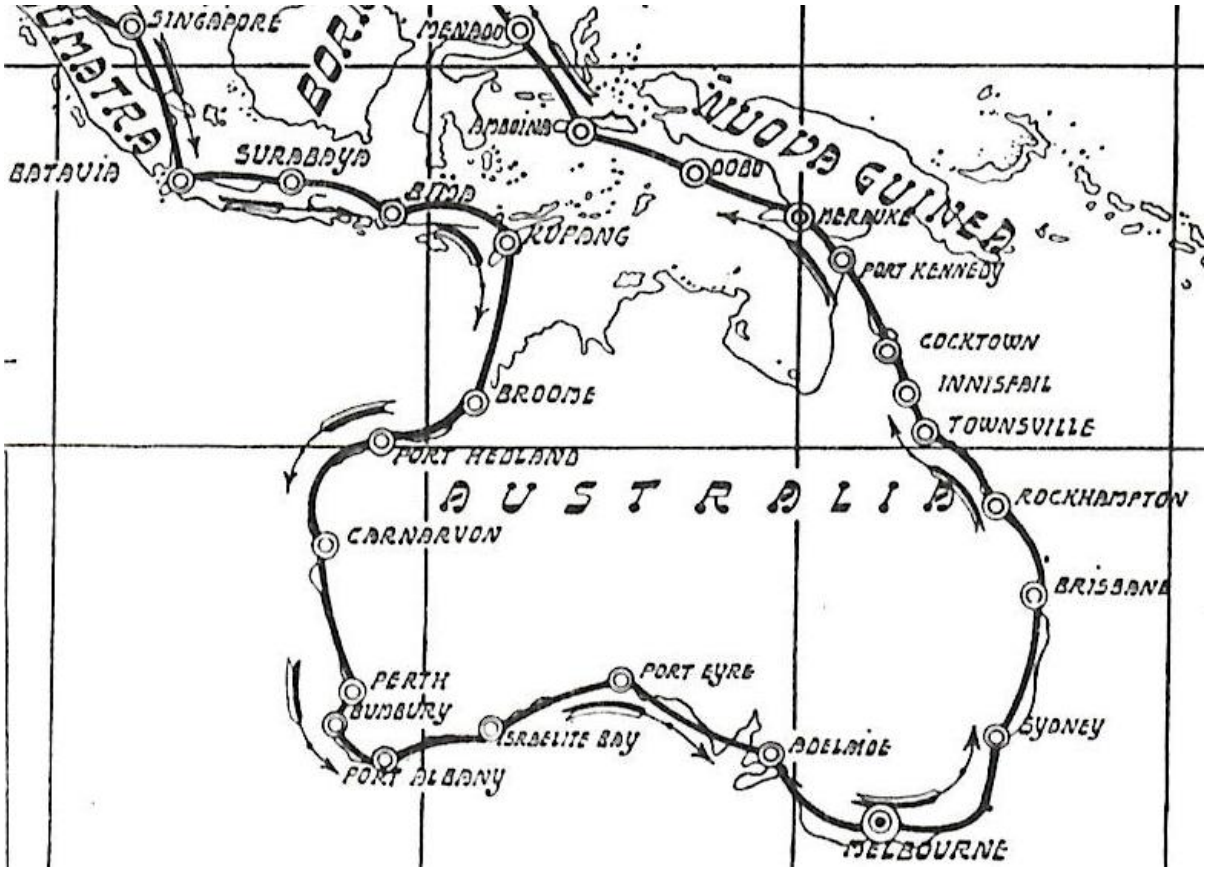
I passed at 12.30 on the vertical of the lighthouse, to be seen by the lights.

I then continued along the coast, and shortly after I spotted a schooner and some boats at anchor: they were probably pearl divers: the first sign of life I saw on the surface of the sea!

The radiator temperature always remained constant, a sign that the water leak was not important.

At 1.20 pm I alighted into Roebuck Bay, in front of Broome. We were in Australia.

*Along the coasts of Australia



Map 3: Netherlands East Indies and Australia

I stopped the engine and anchored in an area that seemed convenient to me, near a boat, where two individuals in shirt sleeves were quietly fishing. Although the presence of a seaplane was not usual at Broome (in fact, my aircraft was the second that alighted in the waters of the bay, preceded the year before by the seaplane with which the Australian aviators Goble and Mac Intyre had toured Australia), no greeting or sign of surprise left the boat. The two who were on board turned around just a little and peacefully continued to fish and smoke their pipes.

Nor was there any sign of life to be seen on earth. I then remembered that it was May 31 and that it was Sunday. And on Sundays, as we know, in all Anglo-Saxon countries there is absolute rest. We tried to make a few gestures and call, but the two didn't even answer us. We then lit a cigarette too, and, lying on the hull in the shade of the upper wing, we began to smoke, waiting philosophically for someone to show up, lulled by the slight rocking of the waves in the sweet warmth of the spring climate.

After about half an hour we were roused from our contemplation by a small boat, equipped with a small engine. Inside were the owner, a pearl fisherman, and the “manager” of West Australian Airways, an Australian air navigation company that uses land aircraft to provide air communications between Perth and all the ports on the NW coast

He told us at once that we should change anchorage if we did not want to be dry at low tide, for there was a difference of twelve yards between high and low tide; This news made me little happy because by now we had already tidied up and covered the engine with hoods and I could not think of starting it again.

The little motorboat offered to tow us. At first I refused, because it seemed impossible to me that he could succeed, given the smallness of the engine. However, we tried, and it actually managed to move us about 500 meters into a channel where we could be safe, even at low tide.

On this boat we went ashore with our luggage; but the tide had already gone down and to reach the shore it was necessary to walk over 300 meters in the mud. With holy resignation we alighted, and off we went with suitcases on our shoulders and shoes in our hands, in single file. Some boys threw a “hurrah” at us; local authorities were waiting for us, and our pilot set about the presentations.

Since no one thought of getting rid of my suitcases and shoes, I had to limit myself to bowing.

Suddenly I felt taken by the arm. It was Broome's doctor, who mysteriously pulled me aside.

“Are you sick?” he asked me.

“Thank God very well, otherwise I would have come by steamer”.

“And your companion is ill? Look, you should not have come ashore before being admitted to free practice. You would be in contravention, but we will let it go…”

“Thank you! Another time I will raise the yellow flag”.

After a short hasty meal we gave our hands to the supplies. It was not a simple or short operation. The gasoline was in 32-litre drums, very unwieldy. The motor boat was the only boat available in Broome.

It was necessary to take off the shoes again and carry the drums on the aircraft, two at a time, by means of the providential boat. It being Sunday, it was impossible to have anyone to help us, except the pearl diver and the Airways manager, who kindly lent themselves.

As the drums were emptied, the boat turned back, left the empties on the ground and carried more full ones back. The system was not, as can be well understood, very rapid.

No wonder, then, that the moon, which rose to illuminate the incipient darkness, still found us at work. There was no lack of generous souls: a boy of twelve, with a tiny boat, a real walnut shell, given to him by his father because he had passed the exams, also brought us a can of gasoline and watched with great interest all our work.

Reduced to pitiful conditions due to the fatigue and mud in which we had to wallow for transport, at 9 pm we stopped working and postponed the rest of the supply to the next day.

Ernesto managed, with a small blow of a hammer well given on the metal, to fix the water leak that had occurred in a cylinder. Checking the contents of the radiator showed us a normal consumption of water, a sign that the leak was minor.

If only we had been able to refresh ourselves serenely, after such a laborious day! Even this was not granted to us, again because it was Sunday, and on Sunday evening in Broome there is no hot food. So we had to settle for a few slices of salami and a glass of mineral water in a small bar, where our pearl fisherman took us.

I then had the pleasure of seeing the doctor again, who came to bring me the numerous paperwork to sign for the crossing of the border.

In the evening I received a telegram from Lord Bruce, Prime Minister of the Australian Confederation, which concluded as follows: “We welcome you to our country and feel that in emulating the success of our compatriots you have accomplished something that will further cement the friendship that exists between Italy and Australia. S M Bruce, Prime Minister”.

The route from Broome to Melbourne, with a total length of about 6300 kilometres, took place along the west and south coasts of Australia, divided into eight stages, five of which varied in length between 800 and 900 kilometres, and three of about 600 kilometres.

The most difficult stage and on which depended, it can be said, the success of the journey, was the one between Israelite Bay and Fowler Bay, of 920 kilometres, because it ran along the uninhabited and inaccessible coastline of the Great Australian Bight. This was full of unknowns, worse than on the Kupang-Broome route; all the more so since my information indicated in that season there were stormy seas and strong winds from the west.

Believed to have been taken at Broome

Western Australian Airways was a pioneer in civil aviation and assisted de Pinedo.

1 June: to Port Hedland

On June 1, I left Broome.

I copy from my logbook the description of the departure: "Take-off in the channel with a crosswind to the left difficult because the aircraft struggles to go on the "step". A sudden gust raises the left wing and the aircraft returns to the right against the ground; I

insist and finally manage to put the aircraft on the “step”. I go back to the left, then to the right, and I manage to put the aircraft in the air despite the strong wind from the SE”

I held my breath, to tell the truth, until I felt the aircraft in the air.

Instead of Onslow, as I had planned, I went to Port Hedland according to the advice given to me by the manager of the Airways; actually the place was much more suitable.

Not having time to fetch the gasoline stationed at Onslow there, I took the quantity I needed from the Western Australia Airways depot.

3 June to Perth

The next day I was in Carnarvon and on June 3 in Perth.

The navigation in these three stages took place without any incident.

Port Hedland is a smaller town than Broome and was built a few years ago; the dwellings consist of wooden shacks and prefabricated cabins. The hotel (left) where we went to sleep had walls built with metal from old petrol cans.

There, I received a telegram from the head of the Government, Hon. Mussolini, which filled me with joy and which I kept as a precious talisman.

We found in Port Hedland an Italian, a Salesian father, fat and stocky, a great man who began to work with us all the time to make himself useful; even in Carnarvon we found an Italian, a worker who left the workshop on the day of our arrival to offer us his services.

We were going into winter, because we were in the Southern Hemisphere, and we were starting to feel cold. I had lost my gloves, and I never found the time or opportunity to buy another pair, so that my hands were numb in flight.

Australia's west coast is as arid, monotonous and desolate as anywhere. A vast plain, a few sandy dunes here and there, a few large areas of marsh plants on the seashore. For miles and miles there was no sign of life either on the water or on land.

I alighted in Perth, the capital of Western Australia, and was enthusiastically welcomed.

I have a very pleasant memory of Perth, for it was the first modern and developed city I saw after so many remote countries. It stands on the right bank of a river that widens to form almost a small lake, crossed by innumerable sails.

Flowery and cheerful gardens, houses scattered on the slope of verdant hills, magnificent parks!

LA DOMENICA DEL CORRIERE

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Il volo prodigioso. L'arrivo del comandante italiano De Pinedo a Perth in Australia.
(Disegno di A. Beltrame).

The flight was rapidly gaining greater attention in Italy.

THIRD FLIGHT TO AUSTRALIA

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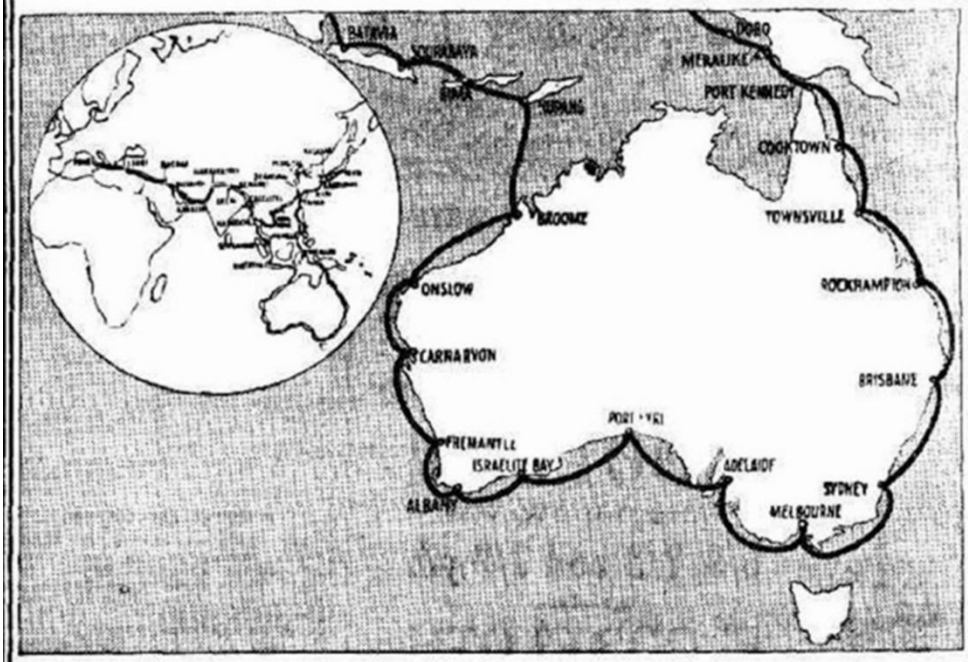
Italian Airman Reaches Broome



Sir Ross Smith, first to reach Australia by air, used

SHELL

Lieutenant Parer, second to reach Australia by air, used

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Major Di Pinedo, third to reach Australia by air, used

SHELL

In every trans-world flight, SHELL has proved, under the most trying conditions, its supreme dependability and high power capacity qualities which motorists the world over are daily turning to advantage in the efficient running of their cars.

A huge advertising campaign was beginning.

4 June to 8 June across the Great Australian Bight

On the next stage, on June 4, I had an unexpected stop.

I had already left Perth in the rain and in bad weather, but the conditions, going south, got worse and worse. The appearance of the sky was of a fantastic variety, the clouds broken in tatters ranged from bright white to the darkest black, flashes of sunshine here and there lit up iridescent rainbow reflections. a very beautiful and strange phenomenon, which I never saw again. Below the aircraft a very bright halo, of all the colours of the rainbow, was seen, against the background of a cloud darker than the others. In the midst of it was the sharp and precise outline of my device, completely in shadow. It looked like a phantasmagorical image. I believe it was an effect of refraction due to the high atmospheric humidity in those particular light conditions .

But time did not allow me to be very enraptured by the spectacle. The engine had a sound that made me suspicious, and I decided to land at Bunbury.

At Bunbury everyone was watching me fly over. I must say that the Mayor had telegraphed me to Perth begging me to pass over the city on my way to Albany, because in his country they had never seen an aircraft like mine.

Everyone was happy to see me land. Some boys came with autograph books who then begged me, as they left, to fly over the school building.

I was given the honour of the “civic reception”.

This ceremony consists of a 1m official reception in the hall of the Municipal Council. The Mayor presides over and makes a greeting speech, proposing a toast to the guest and then the most important councilors speak in turn.

A toast cannot be made if one of the councillors does not support the Mayor's proposal.

After that the toast takes place. Everyone stands up and sings in chorus:

For he is a jollygood fellow And so say all of us.

The *jolly good fellow,* which was me, had to remain seated in the meantime. Then he was allowed to take the floor to thank him. Large libations closed the ceremony.

I was able to get in touch with Port Albany by telephone at City Hall. I knew that a strong gale had broken out, which had also seriously endangered the ships in the port. Later I was informed that heavy rains and gales from the SW were continuing.

So I postponed my departure to the next day. The engine was checked: It was in excellent condition, except that the spark plugs were a bit dirty.

5 June: departure from Bunbury

The dawn of June 5 was veiled by fog so widespread that it prevented it from seeing beyond fifty meters; but the layer of fog was not very high, because the sun's rays were able to penetrate it.

After waiting some time, I decided to leave anyway, and at 8 o'clock in the morning I started and took off, adjusting to the banks of the river. As soon as I was at an altitude of 15 meters, I found myself above the fog.

I encountered a lot of west wind at the top, which made me advance rapidly. I cut on land directly in the direction of Port Albany, and so I did it in defiance of the ill-reputed Chief Leeuwin.

I tried to leave at Port Albany the same day, but it was not possible for me because of the bad state of the sea; After two unsuccessful attempts, which made us take a very abundant shower, I postponed.

In the evening I received a telegram from Bunbury: the pupils thanked me for having passed on the roof of the school on my departure. Jo I really had forgotten about it and so I understood that I must have passed by chance.

6 June: to Israelite Bay

The sole building on Israelite Bay is now a ruin. The picture shows a (very rare) visit from a camel train.

The coast between Port Albany and Fowler Bay (Port Eyre) for about 1600 kilometres is devoid of any settlement. Not being able to cover this distance in a single distance, I had chosen Israelite Bay as an intermediate stopover, where there is only a small telegraph post, which serves to retransmit telegrams on the line that connects the regions of the East to those of the West. The bay is completely open to the east, but is sheltered from the west winds, which are the ones that blow constantly in the winter season.

The crossing to Israelite Bay was accomplished on June 6, at a speed of about 230 kilometres per hour due to strong west winds, along a rough and deserted coast.

The population of Israelite Bay was represented as follows: the head of the telegraph office, his wife, two children between four and six years of age, two postal workers, four natives, a cow, two horses and some chickens. Land transport: a cart; for seafarers: a two-oared boat.

Communications with the rest of the world from this kind of hermitage take place four times a year by means of a steamer. The chief of Israelite Bay was therefore very happy to receive a bag of correspondence that had been entrusted to me for him in Port Albany.

The locality did not encourage us to stay very long, especially as the chief of the post told me, although the bay was sheltered from the west winds, there was often high sea depending on the bad state offshore, and this could compromise my starting manoeuvre.

To refuel I had run the boat aground on the beach, but then, when the tide had dropped, it had remained completely stranded.

Our mission had aroused great interest among those people who had been confined far from the world.

On the line there were two other telegraph posts for the transmission of messages (of course not for local necessities, since kangaroos were the only living beings that inhabited the district) and that day they were in continuous activity to ask for news. The small town of Ceduna in Murat Bay telegraphed asking me to land there instead of Fowler Bay, informing us that they had prepared and organised all the supplies I needed. Port Eyre insisted that I should not change my route and so I agreed, but I became aware of the rivalry among the townships, of which the messages that reached me through the wire, gave me a distant echo.

7 June: to Port Eyre

On the night of the 6th to the 7th there was a magnificent full moon. Given the absolute calm that reigned over the sea, I decided to make the crossing at night, leaving at midnight, the time when the high tide should have made the aircraft float again.

But at midnight we were waiting for this, but were disappointed, because the tide was lower than the daytime tide, and the sea did not even reach the aircraft. Aided then by all the able-bodied population of Israelite Bay, namely, by the chief postman, by the two helpers, and by the four natives, we set about digging the sand with our hands and shovels to bring the water to the hull. It was an improbable effort. We worked until 4 o'clock in the morning, at which time we suspended work because of fatigue and because, in spite of all our efforts, we had not been able to bring the water to the necessary height.

At 6.30 a.m., after a short rest, we returned to the enterprise and this time I limited myself to turning the aircraft towards the sea, which was not even easy, since it was a matter of moving a mass of three tons. Having done this, I started the engine and with successive jerks of the engine I was able to slide the device into the water.

I take the description of the departure from my logbook: “As I float, the wind changes direction from North to West, and two take-off attempts are unsuccessful. The water (in the radiator) rises to 85°. I let myself drift offshore with the engine stopped to cool the water, but I find myself almost at the shoal and give the engine heading straight to the ground to be sure to put the device on the step, against the wind. In fact I succeed, but I am forced, leaning on the water with the right float, to turn quite narrow by almost 180 ° at a short distance from land. The manoeuvre succeeds”.

The manoeuvre, as you can see, was not easy, because there was a risk of breaking a wing, but there was no other way to do it.

Most of the coastline was not good for emergency landings!

The navigation was very monotonous and gloomy. The flat, arid, uninhabited land unfolded below us with its coastline so straight. The two telegraph posts of Eyre and Eucla one-thirds and two-thirds of the way were the only signs of life we saw. After Eucla the coast becomes inaccessible even to the sea, because it descends steeply to the water from a short height like a very long terrace. The very names of this desolate region, Nullarbor Plain and No Man's Land, give the impression of its immense isolation and bareness.

After about six hours of flight, which seemed interminable to me, I sighted some rocks and noticed some irregularities of the coast: it was Fowler Bay with its small town of Port Eyre, with its few houses, a few sheds, a docked pier for ships. It almost seems like a metropolis after so much loneliness.

Here I received some telegrams that showed me how in Melbourne they had become passionate about my flight. Our night adventure of Israelite Bay was reported in the telegraph news and the newspapers anxiously sought to obtain the latest news. A committee had been formed to receive me. A program of parties and banquets was ready.

Poor us!

From Flinders in Streaky Bay on the route to Adelaide, the schoolmasters telegraphed me asking me to pass over the city because the pupils wanted to see me...

8 June Port Eyre to Perth

On June 8 I left Port Eyre. Here too I had to perform a manoeuvre similar to that of Israelite Bay. I deviated from the course and decreased altitude to pass over Flinders. Here the traffic in the streets was interrupted, the population was all crammed into the streets, on the crossroads, in the squares: motionless, astonished. It almost seemed to me that a current of sympathy towards me and my country came from below.

I cut the Eyre Peninsula, which ends southwards at Cape Catastrophe, from which I kept a respectful distance, then passed a new stretch of sea, the Spencer Gulf, another peninsula, that of York, another gulf, the Saint Vicent, and finally arrived at Port Adelaide, the capital of South Australia.

I landed in the Outer Harbour at a quay where an enthusiastic, noisy and gesticulating multitude awaited me.

When I went ashore, the police had to make way for me. Many were bruised in the crush. Reception at the Town Hall, banquets, speeches. It was a sample of what awaited us in Melbourne.

Gennariello moored in Outer Harbour, Adelaide

9 June: to Melbourne

On June 9 I made the crossing from Port Adelaide to Melbourne, the last of the first part of my journey.

The tail, as they say, is the hardest to flay.

And in fact the engine gave me some annoyance: a valve that showed a slight beginning of jamming. The weather was bad, and the sea too. I had strong winds against course for most of the trip, and frequent rains.

At Queenscliff, at the entrance to Port Philip, in the far north of which I found Melbourne, two Australian Air Force seaplanes were waiting for me in flight. They flew me to Point-Cook Airfield where three squadrons of ground aircraft took to the skies and escorted me to Melbourne.

At 3 pm I alighted in Saint Kilda, a suburb of Melbourne, where about 40,000 people were waiting for me.

In fifty days and 160 hours of flight with various fortunes, I had travelled about 23,500 kilometres.

The first part of my project had thus been executed.

*Melbourne: 8 June to 16 July

“The Australian people are happy to welcome the first foreigner to come from Europe to Melbourne by air”. So said the Mayor of Saint Kilda who, dressed in the official uniform, received me at the landing.

I will not describe the ovations of the crowd, and the expansions that greeted us on our descent to earth. The police had to protect us from a massacre that was seriously threatened by our admirers, who crowded around us to see us and shake our hands. The Italian Colony seemed to be in the grip of a crisis of enthusiastic fury.

The suppressed anxiety of those who had followed our journey, always with the doubt that a damned accident might perhaps in the end compromise our success, now exploded into a manifestation of jubilation, the memory of which is very dear to my heart.

Yet all this left me perfectly indifferent. I thought that my journey was still at the beginning and that other and much harder trials awaited me.

The nomadic life, which lasted about fifty days, was now to be momentarily interrupted, until the new resumption.

Avoiding the expansion of the crowd, I returned to the aircraft and flew him back to the Point Cook seaplane base, a few kilometres from Melbourne, where he was hospitalized.

That evening, in the hotel, we had an idea of the popularity acquired by us, without

knowing it, among the Australians; While we were quietly having dinner with a few friends, the audience, noticing our presence, improvised a spontaneous and warm gesture of sympathy, which culminated with the “For He is a Jolly good Fellow” sung standing by those present.

According to what I had planned, in Melbourne the engine had to be dismantled for a complete overhaul. So it was done. I expected the work to last four weeks; it lasted a week longer, both because the Point Cook seaplane base is about eighteen kilometres from Melbourne, where Ernesto returned in the evening to have fun after the arduous daytime work, and because of the limited working hours of the Australian seaplane base workshops.

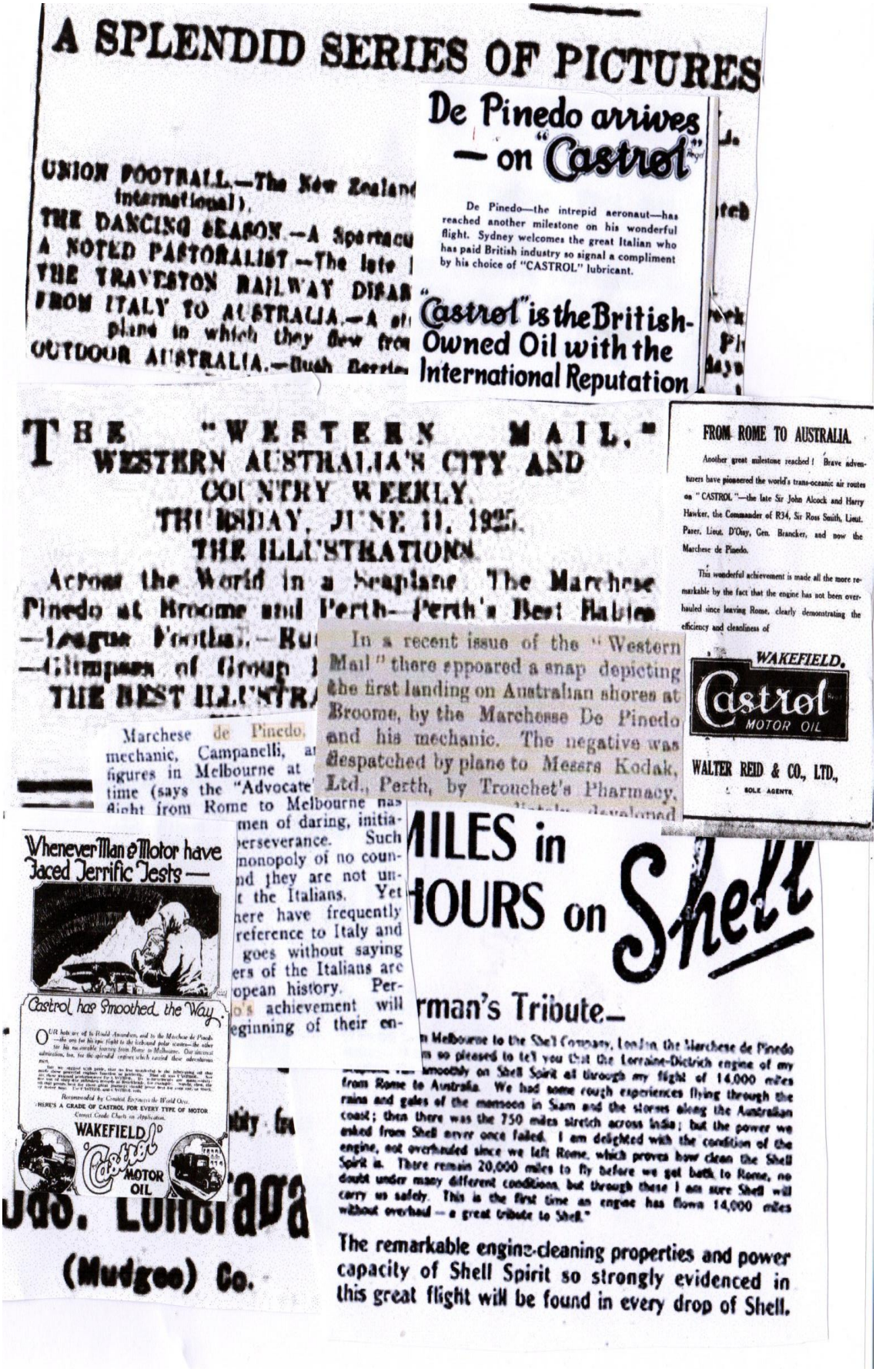
In about a week the engine was completely disassembled; the cylinders were in perfect condition, and the valve seats were also in order, except for one that had given us some trouble on the journey from Adelaide to Melbourne. The crankshaft, the bearings of the crankshaft and the connecting rods, were, after about 160 hours of flight, in such good condition that it was not considered necessary to disassemble them. The carburettors and magnetos were put back in place as they were.

The aircraft was completely checked and found to be in excellent condition. I limited myself, as a complete operation, to changing the side floats and a slightly curved wing strut. I had a lot of quality material in Melbourne, such as a rudder, a pair of ailerons and more, but I didn't change anything, as I didn't need to. The adjustment of the aircraft was also examined and found perfect.

The representative of the Lorraine Company in Melbourne had provided us with a beautiful car, which was very useful for the daily Point Cook trips.

In order not to take too many papers with me, I had not yet prepared the routes from Australia to Japan. I did this work in Melbourne, and the hydrographic office of the Australian Navy kindly placed at my disposal all the material I could need. I used only nautical charts, the course taking place almost everywhere on the sea.

Trove reproduces hundreds of Australian newspaper advertisements featuring de Pinedo and Campanelli.



A SPLENDID SERIES OF PICTURES

UNION FOOTBALL.—The New Zealand
international).
THE DANCING SEASON.—A Spectacu
A NOTED PASTORALIST.—The late
THE TRAVESTON RAILWAY DISAS
FROM ITALY TO AUSTRALIA.—A
plane in which they flew fro
OUTDOOR AUSTRALIA.—Bush

De Pinedo arrives — on "Castrol"

De Pinedo—the intrepid aeronaut—has reached another milestone on his wonderful flight. Sydney welcomes the great Italian who has paid British industry so signal a compliment by his choice of "CASTROL" lubricant.

"Castrol" is the British-Owned Oil with the International Reputation

THE "WESTERN MAIL."
WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S CITY AND
COUNTRY WEEKLY.
THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 1925.
THE ILLUSTRATIONS

Across the World in a Seaplane. The Marchese Pinedo at Broome and Perth—Perth's Best Babies—League Football.—Ru
—Glimpses of Group
THE BEST ILLUSTRA

Marchese de Pinedo, mechanic, Campanelli, a figures in Melbourne at time (says the "Advocate flight from Rome to Melbourne has

In a recent issue of the "Western Mail" there appeared a snap depicting the first landing on Australian shores at Broome, by the Marchesse De Pinedo and his mechanic. The negative was despatched by plane to Messrs Kodak, Ltd., Perth, by Trouchet's Pharmacy,

men of daring, initia-
perseverance. Such
monopoly of no coun-
nd they are not un-
t the Italians. Yet
here have frequently
reference to Italy and
goes without saying
ers of the Italians are
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's achievement will
eginning of their en-

FROM ROME TO AUSTRALIA.

Another great milestone reached! Brave adventurers have pioneered the world's trans-oceanic air routes on "CASTROL"—the late Sir John Alcock and Harry Hawker, the Commander of R34, Sir Ross Smith, Lieut. Parer, Lieut. D'Oisy, Gen. Brancker, and now the Marchese de Pinedo.

This wonderful achievement is made all the more remarkable by the fact that the engine has not been overhauled since leaving Rome, clearly demonstrating the efficiency and cleanliness of

WAKEFIELD.
Castrol
MOTOR OIL

WALTER REID & CO., LTD.,
SOLE AGENTS.

Whenever Man & Motor have Faced Terrific Tests—

Castrol has Smoothed the Way.

OUR both are of the World Awarders, and to the Marchese de Pinedo—the one for his epic flight to the icebound polar waters—the other for his no-stop journey from Rome to Melbourne. Our sincerest admiration, too, for the splendid engines which carried these adventurers.

Recommended by Greatest Engineers the World Over.
HERE'S A GRADE OF CASTROL FOR EVERY TYPE OF MOTOR
Correct Grade Chart on Application.

WAKEFIELD
Castrol
MOTOR OIL

MILES in HOURS on Shell

rman's Tribute—

n Melbourne to the Shell Company, London, the Marchese de Pinedo
m so pleased to tell you that the Lorraine-Dietrich engine of my
moothly on Shell Spirit all through my flight of 14,000 miles
from Rome to Australia. We had some rough experiences flying through the rains and gales of the monsoon in Siam and the storms along the Australian coast; then there was the 750 miles stretch across India; but the power we asked from Shell never once failed. I am delighted with the condition of the engine, not overhauled since we left Rome, which proves how clean the Shell Spirit is. There remain 20,000 miles to fly before we get back to Rome, no doubt under many different conditions, but through these I am sure Shell will carry us safely. This is the first time an engine has flown 14,000 miles without overhaul—a great tribute to Shell."

The remarkable engine-cleaning properties and power capacity of Shell Spirit so strongly evidenced in this great flight will be found in every drop of Shell.

Ltd. Lundaga
(Mudgee) Co.

De Pinedo (holding a bouquet of flowers) and Campanelli (in dark suit), listen to the speech of the mayor of Melbourne in their honour. On the right, with the sword, the Italian consul Antonio Grossardi.
Photo: Royal Australian Air Force Point Cook, Melbourne

My main occupation in the first days of my stay was the official visits to the various Australian authorities, the participation in ceremonies and banquets, with which the warm Australian heart wanted to show us its sympathy, and the reply to the numerous congratulatory messages that reached me.

From these I was able to perceive that my journey had been followed with more interest than I could have imagined, and this, if on the one hand could flatter me, on the other made my task more serious, imposing on me above all the duty to correspond worthily to the confident expectations of the public.

In addition to the greetings of the government authorities, I received those of the President of the Chamber of Deputies and the Mayor of Naples, my beautiful hometown. The Governor-General of the state of Victoria offered us a lunch; a community breakfast was given to us by the Australian Federal Government, and the Mayor of Melbourne solemnly received us in the Civic Hall, an honour very rarely granted: in recent years a “civic reception” of this magnitude had taken place only for the Prince of Wales.

The following illustration occupied a full-page of the Melbourne *Punch* magazine.

The next page, also from *Punch,* points out to its readers the cultural excellence of Italy: they were regarded, particularly by the 'ordinary' Australians as inferior people, referred to as 'dagos'.

ITALY'S REBUKE

Pinedo (surprised): "Cheer rather my race which has given the world Dante, da Vinci, Michelangelo—all, by the way, what some of you would call Dagoes."

The Italians of Melbourne, who number about a thousand, offered us a rich gift, presented to us in solemn form in one of the city's theatres. Another theatre gave a gala performance, on the occasion of which the boxes seemed almost to disappear under a magnificent decoration of flowers and flags.

The journalists, of course, did not leave me alone: there were always some who were stationed in the lobby of the hotel to photograph me and to interview me often even on topics that had nothing in common with aviation. I remember that one asked me for an interview to know my impressions of the way in which car traffic was regulated in Melbourne. The same interview they told me was asked to the famous violinist Kreisler, who was in Melbourne at the same time for some concerts!

Shortly after my arrival I had the opportunity to attend the opening of the Australian Parliament, at which the Governor-General of Australia read a message on the most important political issues of the day. The Labour Party predominated in almost all the states, which therefore had Labour governments; conversely, the Commonwealth government was nationalist, and Lord Bruce, head of the party, was the prime minister. A very interesting issue for us at that time was the bill on immigration to Australia. Recent provisions had restricted the influx of immigrants, except for those from England; but, in truth, the greatest rigours were against immigration of colour, that is, against those belonging to the yellow race. I noted, however, that there was a certain misunderstanding about Italy's position in the world. In some circles Italians were even considered s people of , and some even came to wonder that the colour of my skin did not differ greatly from that of an Australian! Outside the most cultured circles, in general in Australia it is ignored that Italy is the cradle of arts and civilisation.

The arrival of my aircraft had, if nothing else, the merit of opening the eyes of many people to our country, for, with the exception of two Australian aircraft which in previous years had flown from London to Melbourne, one taking three months and the other about eight, no aircraft from any other nation had yet flown to Australia.

But perhaps the main cause of the restrictions that are currently being made there on immigration dates back to economic reasons. The emigrant to Australia means cheap labour, and is therefore a formidable competitor for Australian workers who, having shorter working hours than all the other workers in the world and earning more than anyone else, enjoy extraordinary wealth. It must be considered that the Australia of today was formed by successive immigrations of Europeans who have made it, in a few years, an advanced and modern country, replacing and eliminating the few indigenous elements, who were and are on the lowest rungs of civilisation.

The first immigrants belonged to penal colonies, when the British Government, no longer able to send its convicts to Virginia, chose Australia as a destination; in 1788 the first settlement of 600 condemned men was established in Port Jackson, modern Sydney.

These first settlers were succeeded by immigrations of free men, who made the new land more valuable; the inhabitants thus multiplied, favoured by the excellent soil and the healthy climate. The mirage of discovery gave a new and greater impetus to immigration, towards the middle of the nineteenth century, until it progressively reached the current population of about 7 million souls.

Although a part of the immense Australian territory is not habitable, the present population of Australia, which has an average density of one inhabitant per square kilometre, is far from what the immense local possibilities and resources would allow and entail. The constant increase in the world's population must inevitably produce a transmigration of inhabitants from the densest countries to the least dense ones, especially with regard to Australia which, as I said, has the density of one inhabitant per square kilometre, while there are nations that have 140 inhabitants and even more per square kilometre. On the other hand, today's Australia is a result of, and a fine credit, to immigration, and it certainly cannot be said that the country is already fully populated.

It is a question of selecting and regulating immigration, which must certainly be gradual and relative to the development of the country. I believe that our compatriots can contribute enormously to the progress of this immense and magnificent region, and I hope that the problem of immigration, to which I have referred because it is one of those most passionate to Australian public opinion, can be solved to the mutual satisfaction of the two countries, as the friendly and cordial relations which exist and of which I have had personal experience during my short stay there can suggest.

In Australia the germs of what will in the future be a new human race distinct from the others are seen. It is the eternal evolution of the races that has millennial periods: the Australians have already lost many characteristics of the original Anglo-Saxon stock.

The absence of scruples and traditional prejudices, the love of independence from all ties, of sports and of the free life in the open air, the frank and generous heart, give this people a distinct physiognomy, which gives great hope for its future.

The great increase in schools is admirable. Illiteracy cannot be said to exist. An illiterate person in Australia is such a rare phenomenon that he is regarded as an individual suffering from a strange and unknown disease. The Government, the States and the Municipalities devote very considerable sums to the organisation of educational institutions, of which they are justly proud. The students invited me more than once to visit their schools, and I remember that in one of my visits I was officially welcomed with great honours by all the students lined up by classes, in the presence of which the rector read me an address containing infinite praise for our country; and later the subject of the geography lesson was indeed Italy, of which the students had to draw the coasts, copying them from a large wall map. This was a gentle and delicate thought, by which I was very moved

LOVED THEM ALL

THE BEAUTIFUL AUSTRALIAN GIRLS

DE PINEDO'S MESSAGE

DON'T FORGET SEAPLANES. GREAT PROSPECTS

Interviewed in London, Commander De Pinedo had two messages for Australia.

"Tell Australians not to forget their wonderful aviation prospects, especially for seaplanes," he said.

Then he added that he would never forget the beautiful Australian girls. "I have never seen prettier; I loved them all," he said.

("Sun" Special)

LONDON, Monday Night.

Commander de Pinedo, who arrived in London on Saturday, returned to the Continent to-day.

He said to the Special Representative of "The Sun": "Signor Mussolini was delighted with the way in which Australia received me, and asked me to thank the people for him, and to tell them that he wants to visit Australia, but that at present he is too busy.

"The only flight I now desire is from the newspapers," said De Pinedo, who, in inviting the Special Representative of "The Sun" to accompany him in a taxi to the station, recalled when a "Sun" representative last accompanied him was when he was flying in the "Savoia" over Sydney.

"My London visit," he said, "was private. I am going to Paris to join Campanelli, my mechanic, and begin a long holiday. I have no definite plans for the future, except to write a book. Tell Australians not to forget their wonderful aviation prospects, especially for seaplanes. This is one of that country's most vital problems.

"I will never forget the beautiful Australian girls. I have never seen prettier. I loved them all. Tell them I am not married, and that I never intend marrying."

Marquis de Pinedo.

De Pinedo as matinee idol

This newspaper article records his lasting impressions of Australia ...l

This great diffusion of culture means that in Australia, also because of the scarcity of population, it is very difficult to find men who adapt themselves to humble services that are necessary for the life of a people. This has great repercussions on the cost of living, which becomes, as I have seen from a recent comparison, more expensive than England itself.

Free as Australians are from social prejudices, they have created a more free environment where it is easier to live. The girls lead a completely independent life, devote themselves passionately to sports and are treated by men fraternally as true comrades. They are self-confident and intelligent, beautiful in health and strength. This promiscuity and independence leads to greater frankness and less hypocrisy in social relations. Men are mainly concerned with the clubs and then with their friends, and the backbiting of girls, which is a real plague in other countries, does not exist there. If one evening by chance you accompany a girl to a theatre or to a ball and then bring her home, let's say at three in the morning, no one is surprised or finds fault with it or maliciously embroidered on it.

The construction system of cities promotes healthy living in the open air. The houses are built on one floor, separated from each other and interspersed with gardens and plants. There are no colossal palaces, no slums, The extension of a city like Melbourne is therefore enormous, but there are fast and well-organized means of communication, wide and well-paved streets.

All modern scientific inventions are appreciated and enthusiastically adopted. There is no house, even a humble one, that does not have a radio.

Parks and gardens abound rich in rare plants characteristic of the country; numerous and vast sports fields, very well-kept and assiduously frequented. For the clerks, who are not free during the day, there are night “tennis” courts, lit by day by large electric lamps, where you can see them playing enthusiastically until the late hours of the evening.

Also in the vicinity of Melbourne there are magnificent walks and parks, with rich and lush vegetation. Certain species of plants. common to us, arrive there at colossal developments and proportions. The characteristic plants of the Australian flora change the bark instead of the leaves, which are arranged vertically so that sunlight filters through them. Tree species that reach a height of 150 meters are not rare.

The development of the artistic sense in the Australian race has not yet progressed much; of course, the lack of traditions contributes to this. Architectural monuments of importance are rare; The opera house does not exist, and only from time to time are performances staged with foreign artists.

Sun News-Pictorial, Melbourne, 20 June 1925, described the social event of the year:

FLAGS OF THE NATIONS Draped at Gala in Italian Airman's Honor: BRILLIANT THEATRE GATHERING

FLAGS of the Allied nations draped the facade of the dress circle in His Majesty's Theatre last night for the gala performance in honour of the distinguished Italian airman, Marchese de Pinedo and his mechanic, Captain Campanelli. it was a very gay scene when the official group entered the dress circle to go to the boxes. Bluegum foliage was set in clusters to partly screen bright lights grouped at short intervals on the upper circle facade, where the rod, white and green Italian national colours were draped with festoons. Similar clusters of foliage were arranged on the lower tier, and hundreds of red, white, and green balloons floated above the heads of the audience. Over the proscenium very large flags of Italy and Australia were draped to flank the Union Jack, and pendant in front of them was a miniature seaplane —a copy from a Herald photo.

IN THE BOXES: The two airmen sat in a box with the Consul-General for Italy and Signora Grossardl (her black gown scintillated on the corsage with diamente, and over her shoulders was a wrap of ermine fur). The Prime Minister (Mr Bruce), who was accompanied by Mrs Bruce, occupied the managerial box Pale primula georgette formed Mrs Bruce's gown, and it was trimmed with jewelled lace; her wrap was a handsome ivory Spanish shawl. The Lord Mayor (Cr Brunton) and Lady Mayoress sat in the opposite box, and with them were Cr and Mrs Bell. Mrs Brunton's black gown was worn under a black Spanish shawl embroidered with coloured flowers. In the adjoining box were General Sir Harry and Lady Chauvel, accompanied by Lieutenant Adrian Knox and Miss Mary Robertson Lady Chauvel wore a snow leopard fur shoulder wrap over her black gown.

CIRCLE AND STALLS: Also present were: Rear-Admiral and Mrs Hall Thompson (her black panne gown was worn under a fur trimmed wrap), Lady Waley (Sydney), Mrs Percy Dean, Wing, Commander and Mrs R Williams (her chenille brocaded georgette gown was in two shades of wallflower), Captain Bracegirdle, RAN, and Mrs Bracegirdle, General and Mrs W A Coxen, Colonel and Mrs T Thomas, Senator Pearce, Miss Marjorie Pearce, Mr Gibson (Postmaster-General), Dr and Mrs Stanley Argyle, Mr Atkinson MHR, General Johnston, Miss Gwen Johnston, the Consul for USA anti Mrs Norman Anderson, Major T Ryan, Mrs P G C Cresswell, Mr and Mrs Macandie, Alderman and Mrs Cabena, Mr and Mrs Courtney Dix, Mrs Harry Pannifex, Commander and Mrs Loudon Sliand, Commander and Mrs Stevens, Sir Littleton Groom, Miss Jessie Groom, Mrs Ernest Graham, Sir George Ciscaden, Miss Beatrice Ciscaden, Flight-Lieutenant and Mrs Delarue, Colonel and Mrs Walter Cass, the Consul for France and Madame Turck, General Sir John Monash, Mr Theodore Fink Mr Keith Murdoch, General and Mrs V C Sellheim, Mrs F W Eggleston, the Consul for China and Mrs Ouei, Squadron-Leader and Mrs P A McBain, Captain Sydenham, Surgeon-Captain Gayer Phipps, Lieutenant-Colonel C B Appleton, Squadron-Leader W Anderson, Mr and Mrs A C Joyce, Mr and Mrs P E Coleman, Squadron-Leader and Mrs A T Cole, Squadron-Leader and Mrs Wrigley, Flight-Lieutenant Ivo McIntyre, Flight-Lieutenant, and Mrs A H Cobby*, Flight-Lieutenant and Mrs A Hepburn, Flight-Lieutenant and Mrs F W Lucas, Flight-Lieutenant and Mrs C J Hannan, Flight Lieutenant and Mrs G Cherry, Flight Lieutenant and Mrs E Howells, Flight Lieutenant and Mrs G Jones, Flight Lieutenant and Mrs A Hempel, Flight Lieutenant E A Mustard, Flight-Lieutenant J W Summers, Mrs John Buchan, Flight-Lieutenant Brownell, the Town Clerk (Mr McCall), Cr and Mrs George Crispin, Mrs W J Roberts, Mrs W J Bourchler, Miss Nancy Madden, Mrs Charles Batten, Mr Edwurd Shacltcll and his second daughter, Mr and Mrs G H Williams, Cr and Mrs Elliott, Cr and Mrs S Morel], Dr H Gongoult Smith, Alderman and Mrs F Stapley.

* A H Cobby, a very famous airman in World War I, had been a Captain in the RFC, but had just rejoined the RAAF as a Flight Lieutenant. Wrigley and Murphy had been the first to fly across Australia – in 1919 to meet the Smith flight in Darwin.

Towards the end of my stay in Melbourne, the Consul General, Comm. Grossardi[15], offered a great banquet to which all the major Australian authorities were invited, who had given their valuable and courteous support on the occasion of my flight.

From The Home, an Australian Quarterly*, August 1925. The de Pinedo dinner at the Menzies Hotel was the major Melbourne social event of that three-month period.*

The large dining room of the Menzies Hotel had been transformed on that occasion into a real greenhouse of plants, and at the banquet, which was new for official ceremonies, many ladies were also invited. I was made various toasts of greeting and good wishes, and the Prime Minister Lord Bruce had words of great sympathy for our country.

And here we are starting again now, after the brief and cheerful pause, the arduous and nomadic life.

In the first week of July the engine was finally ready and was put back in place on the aircraft which we took out of the hangar on July 10.

July 10: test flight of overhauled aircraft

We then tested the engine, which worked so regularly that it aroused great admiration in the Australian mechanics present, who congratulated Ernesto. The same day, despite the fact that there was a rough sea from the east, very annoying for take-off, I made a short test flight over Melbourne.

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[15] As reported in the local quality newspapers, Grossardi made comment on the virtues of the new Government led by Mussolini, who, he said would “give rise to the respect due to Italy for the great gift of civilisation which it had given to the world”. The recent civil war would result in a reconnection with this former greatness. "Both the Government and its programme," concluded Commendatore Grossardi “are guided by Mussolini, the man endowed with a splendid equilibrium, the man who guided the revolution and whose permanent position at the head of the Government is a profound national necessity." The contribution of Rome to world civilisation was now being exemplified by the exploits of de Pinedo. It is important to note that the policy and processes of Mussolini’s government had wide support throughout the world, and in Australia, rather as Trump’s ideas are resonating today in some quarters.

I was very satisfied with the perfect operation, and I reserved the right to make a new flight of a couple of hours to be more sure, after we adjusted a few more details. And as it was Friday, on the next two days, because of the Australian holiday schedule, our good intentions had to wait.

Moreover, on Sunday the weather conditions could not have been worse, since it was raining and a strong wind was blowing from the East, which prevented the aircraft from being put into the sea. In this connection I must point out that the Point Cook seaplane base is in a bad position. since the ramp, by which the aircraft are placed in the water, is completely open to the sea, and with the easterly winds, which fortunately are not frequent, it is not possible to carry out the manoeuvre of putting a seaplane into the sea. And in fact on Monday 13 July, due to the sea conditions, I had to give up the planned test flight. But I wasted no time. I took advantage of the necessary inaction to look in the port of Melbourne for a place from which I could safely leave.

So I decided to take the aircraft to the port at the mouth of the Yarra and to leave from there. Thus, even if the east wind were high, I could take flight without further delay.

The next day the weather conditions improved and I flew for about two hours with the Italian Consul General on board, making a few laps over Melbourne, I descended very satisfied with that test, landing in the port of . Melbourne, where a mooring buoy had already been prepared at my request.

In the afternoon I loaded up with petrol, since the stage for Sydney was about 1000 kilometres, and set the departure for the next day, Wednesday 15. On the night from Tuesday to Wednesday, the temperature was truly exceptional for Melbourne, as it dropped below zero.

But I did not dislike this, because it determined a much more favourable condition for take-off. So at 8.20 am on the 15th we were on board, greeted by the Consul General and some friends, as well as by the Commander of the Australian Air Force. After the final preparations, I took off at 10 am

July 15: abortive attempt to fly to Sydney

But, as soon as we were in flight, Ernesto warned me that I had to get off because there was a heavy leak of petrol at a connection of the petrol pumps.

We landed again immediately. The petrol leak depended on a very old gasket applied to the new pumps that I had put in place.

Because of the location of these, the repair work took a long time, so that I was forced to postpone my departure until the next day. Ernesto procured the new gasket, cutting it from the leather boot of one of the curious onlookers present, who asked for a fee that Ernesto put a signature on the mutilated leg.

The Future of Aviation in Australia: a report of De Pinedo's comments in Melbourne, June 28.

This is a summary of Francesco's opinion on this subject, as reported in the quality Australian press.

A regular commercial air service linking Australia and Europe is feasible now, given great courage and a lot of money. Also, if his journey to Japan is successful, this will show that this route also is suitable for a practical regular air service, followed by services such as South America across the Pacific Archipelago.

First there should be a mail service, developing eventually to a regular passenger service.

Airships are not the answer. They are slow and require a large crew and huge hangars. They ae also dangerous.

Amphibians are also not the answer, because they cannot carry a good commercial weight and shorter range [because of the additional weight of the aircraft]. The choice is between a flying boat and a land plane, and here the geographical conditions are the determining factor.

Over land masses, the land plane is more convenient; but otherwise the seaplane can land safely in sheltered places along the coast or in the middle of rivers, which means a less expensive organisation. "The needs of a seaplane are not greatly different from the needs of a ship. A good harbor is generally also good for a seaplane" and cities are built on good ports and thus the seaplane can land almost in the heart of every city. Aerodromes must be built everywhere, and this is neither easy nor cheap.

He suggested that the route to Europe should be divided into five zones: Europe, Mesopotamia and Persia, India and Burma, Malay and Dutch islands, and Australia, with maybe separate companies organising their operation to meet their area's specific needs.

He believed that it will be possible to travel from London to Melbourne in not more than two weeks, which means a reduction of half the time which is at present necessary, with the most speedy steamship lines."

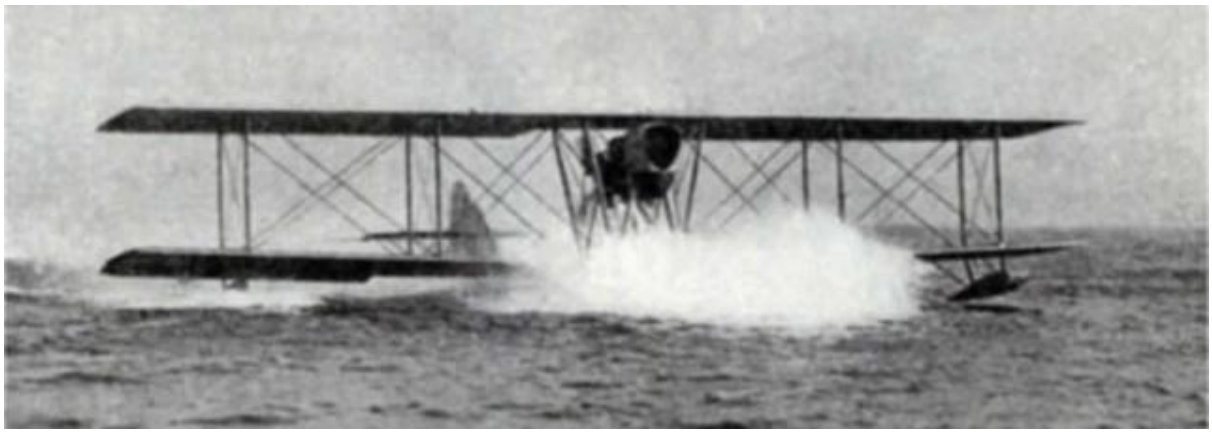
Australia does not seem to realise that the seaplane is of great and peculiar value to this country. It is almost impossible for a seaplane to 'crash,' so long as there is water onto which it may descend. Australia's population is strung out along three thousand miles of coastline.

There is scarcely five miles of that coastline where there is not an inlet of calm water, providing a suitable landing place for seaplanes.

And it is fast! (De Pinedo could fly from Sydney to Brisbane in 4 hours).

*Sydney: 16 July to 6 August

July 16: to Sydney



Believed to be takeoff from Melbourne en route to Sydney

The morning of Thursday, the 16th, was very foggy and gloomy. At! Je 8.45 I started the engine and took off. But the fog did not have a great extent in height; in fact, at 50 meters above sea level, I found myself above it, greeted by a magnificent day.

A grey curtain soon hid Melbourne from my view, which I left with the most regretful regret, and which still remains, among the cities visited on my journey, one of those that have left in me the most nostalgic memory.

Eden: An unexpected stop

The engine was working magnificently and, to gain time and distance, I cut the Wilson promontory towards the ground; I then went into the interior of Cape Howe, where the coast, which up to that point follows an East-West line, turns directly towards the North. After Cape Howe, the coast is very favourable to seaplane routes, because it is very rich in inlets and shelters. Given the long stage, and since it was the first that presented itself to me as such after the engine overhaul, anticipating that the headwind would reduce my range below the limit necessary to reach Sydney, I had placed a small supply of petrol and oil in Batemans Bay; but there was no need. I alighted only for a few minutes, without even stopping the engine in the roadstead of Twofold to pour into the tank a can of oil that I had brought as a reserve.

At 4 pm I was finally over Sydney, gliding directly to Farm Cove, where a multitude of people were waiting for me, including the Australian authorities and the Italian Colony. In this first stage I had no complaint about the weather, which was, on the contrary, quite favourable to me; only the temperature was quite cold.

Believed to be greeting from the Italian Consul in Sydney

The crowd awaited my landing with great anxiety, having been granted permission with great difficulty to alight at Farm Cove, as the local authorities did not consider the place suitable for seaplanes; and indeed the space was very limited.

But Rose Bay, the place where they would have preferred me to descend, was too far from the town, and a little more exposed perhaps than Farm Cove to the north winds; therefore I had insisted on the first place where I actually landed.

The series of banquets and receptions also began in Sydney.

I had the honour of being received in an official capacity by the Lord Mayor in the Civic Hall, and on that occasion I met the Australian aviator Keith Smith who, together with his brother Ross Smith, who had perished in an aviation accident, had flown from London to Australia, about five years before me, in a Wickers Vimy aircraft. He had made an excellent voyage to Port Darwin in Australian territory, taking less than a month; but then he had encountered many vicissitudes due to the breakage of a propeller while crossing the Australian continent from North to South. Keith Smith was very courteous and a good comrade to me, and afterwards took a keen interest in my journey, and I am glad to express my sympathy to him here.

I had decided to stay in Sydney no more than three days; I then had to stay there for three weeks because of some accidents that happened to me.

July 20: aborted departure

July 20 was the day set for my departure. I went on board and addressed the last greetings to the authorities and to the Italian colony, and at 10 15 I was airborne. But I had hardly made a circuit of the city when I felt abnormal vibrations in the engine. I tried to change the rpm: the vibrations stopped, and I then relaxed.

The engine worked very well at first, but after about ten minutes the same irregularities were repeated. I reversed course and flew over Port Jackson for about half an hour, testing the engine at various altitudes and at various speeds. But occasionally the irregularities were repeated.

Under these conditions, considering that after Sydney I would have had very little chance of major repairs to the engine again, it was not convenient for me to continue, also taking into account that very difficult stages awaited me between Australia and the Philippines. I then went back down to Farm Cove, where in the meantime they had already removed the mooring buoy of the aircraft.

Here I had another accident. While floating with the engine at idle rpm I was heading to my usual anchor position, I had a small collision with an Australian motorboat, which produced a fortunately slight dent on the leading edge of the lower right wing, so much so that it was able to be repaired in a couple of days with the help of Australian aviation workers.

The engine was immediately examined, and it was noticed that the spark plugs were dirty with oil, especially those on the left row of cylinders. This abundance of oil produced the ignition irregularities I had noticed in flight.

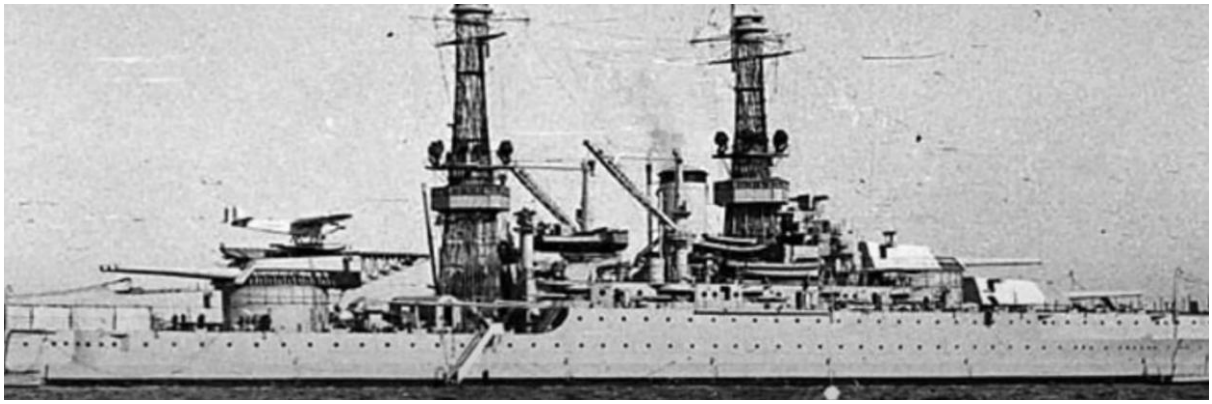
I assumed that the piston rings, which had no stop to fix them in a definite position, had turned, all presenting their openings in a single position, and that this caused the passage of oil from the crankcase into the cylinders. I decided to try again to leave the following Tuesday, as soon as the repair of the wing was ready, except that the arrival of the American fleet was announced for Thursday 23rd. and the Consul pointed out to me that it would be expedient, since I had already postponed my departure, that I should stay until the arrival of the fleet itself. I accepted his invitation, especially since I could thus better understand the condition of the engine. I also took advantage of the more time available to visit the experimental shipyards of the Australian Air Force, directed by an intelligent officer, Major Wackett, feverishly intent on the construction of a seaplane he had designed, the details of which interested me very much. Major Wackett proposed with this aircraft, as he himself told me, to come to Italy to reciprocate the visit I had made to Australia; except that in one of its first tests the hull broke through due to the excessive haste that the inventor had had to take off in not so good weather and sea conditions.

July 23: Visit of US fleet

July 23, the day of the arrival of the American fleet, was a great celebration for Sydney. I can say that almost all that population had poured onto the seashore and all the nearby hills and promontories, from which it was easier to see. Thousands upon thousands of boats sailed through Port Jackson to meet the American fleet. I took off at 9.45 am, and immediately outside the port I saw the magnificent division of seven "super dreadnoughts," which slowly and majestically made their way to the port at the speed of six miles an hour. A strong wind was blowing, and I remember that my departure was not easy, because I ran the risk of being run over by the numerous boats, motorboats and tugboats, which went to meet the fleet. The smoke from all these boats produced a great mist over the harbour, which, like a fog, greatly diminished visibility.

The American ships, in spite of their enormous size, pitched slowly because of the sea until they almost put their bows in the water.

Australian aircraft, which had come for the occasion from Melbourne, circled in the air, and aeroplanes were also launched from American ships, as soon as they entered port, by means of catapults.



The roadstead and all that animation at sea and in the sky formed a truly fantastic spectacle. On that day it was impossible to circulate on the streets of Sydney. In the afternoon, most of the American troops disembarked from the ships and marched through the main streets of the city, passing under a triumphal arch, erected at Farm Cove at the landing point. That day and the days that followed there was great revelry everywhere.

Some American aviators invited me on board their ships and I had interesting conversations with them.

Walking on the deck of those mastodons, each of which represented a value of about a million Italian lire, I thought how they were an admirable product of human genius and activity. But these, which may be called true floating fortresses, are now seriously exposed to the attacks of submarines as well as to those of aircraft. It is true that at present a torpedo is not sufficient to produce the sinking of a ship of 40,000 tons, but there is nothing to prevent the construction of torpedoes that carry a higher explosive charge; and on the other hand, the bombs that planes can carry today constitute a serious threat to the safety of a modern warship. It is probable that the real secret unconfessed reason for the Washington conference is to be found in this truth that has begun to make headway.

At one time, when an enemy fleet was fought and destroyed, it could be assumed that the dominion of the sea had been conquered. But today, given the presence of submarines and aeroplanes, the dominion of the sea cannot be conquered by any fleet of large units. Instead, smaller and faster ships are needed, and therefore less expensive and better defensible against insidious units.

On board the American ships I also witnessed the launch of a seaplane with a catapult. The launch was successful, as was usually the case. Only the aircraft, which I saw launched, was very small. Only one ship had a major aircraft, but I could not witness the launch of it.

On the subject of catapults, I must remember here that at first there was a great deal of distrust of them, because the launches were very dangerous. In fact, I remember that my colleague in the Air Force told me that, having gone on board an American ship to an Italian port, he made the acquaintance of a pilot, introduced to him by the commander himself with these words: “This aviator officer is the bravest man in the world: he asked

to embark on this ship, knowing that he had to be launched with a catapult. It had two predecessors who died at the first launch. He is not yet dead, because he has never been launched".

July 25: a new attempt to start

On the 25th I made a new attempt to start. At 9 o'clock I started the engine, but I couldn't take off, because one of the cylinders didn't give any ignition. I went back to anchor and, disassembling the spark plugs, I found a thin needle stuck between two tips of one of them, right in the cylinder that did not ignite.

At a quarter past 10, having changed the spark plugs, I took off again and set off on course, but after twenty minutes the usual vibrations began, which resulted from irregular ignition of the left row of cylinders. I tried again to go on for a quarter of an hour, but then I decided to return to Sydney, over which city I made about a couple of hours of flight to finally realise the causes of the inconvenience.

At noon I alighted past Farm Cove. I arranged with Wackett to place the aircraft on the beach of Rose Bay (since there were no seaplane hangars in Sydney) and to proceed with the work of dismantling the cylinders to check their condition.

I had hitherto hesitated to take such a resolution, for it seemed strange to me that the engine, which after the overhaul work carried out in Melbourne so admirably by Ernesto, had worked so perfectly on the Melbourne-Sydney stage, could suddenly and without apparent cause present an inconvenience of a serious nature.

The whole afternoon of that day was spent in the manoeuvre of the change of mooring. I flew the aircraft to Rose Bay, stranded it on the beach, and there dismantling was begun without delay. I telegraphed to Melbourne to send me a supply of spare parts that I had left there.

Near the aircraft, a tent was set up on the beach, under which it was better to work. I also hired two Italians from the cologne to help Ernesto and watch the seaplane at night. Once the cylinders were dismantled, we verified, to our surprise, that they had fairly serious longitudinal rifling.

In one pair the rifling was so deep that it was necessary to change them. Fortunately I had two spare pairs, one of which could therefore replace the damaged pair.

This incident seemed to me very strange, since the pairs of cylinders, verified on arrival in Melbourne, had appeared to be in perfect condition, and their interior was then as clear as glass.

On the other hand, on the journey from Melbourne to Sydney the engine had run with perfect regularity, so much so that, rejoicing, I had told Ernesto that it had never seemed to me that the engine had worked so well.

Now there was nothing to do but try to get the engine in the best condition to be able to work normally.

I confess that I had good reasons to be somewhat worried. In fact, if I had to stay longer in Sydney, I would then have crossed the Philippines in the worst season of the year, that is, when the frequency of typhoons is at its highest and with it the atmospheric precipitation. Also, having left Australia, about eight stages awaited me, among others, in a wide sea rarely travelled by steamers.

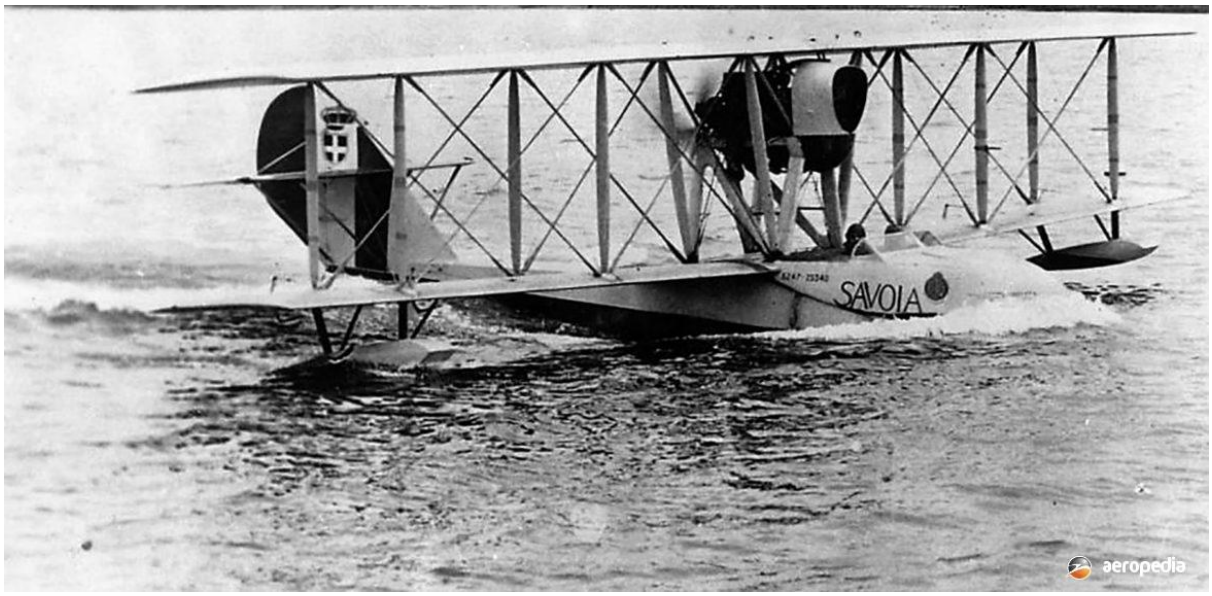
To set out, therefore, with an engine which did not work well for the voyage of this kind, was to give up all hope of arriving.

August 9: completion of repairs; flight to Brisbane

On the first of August the work was ready and I tried the aircraft again in flight. The engine ran regularly; however, I decided to carry the other pair of cylinders which I had not used.

A small amount of work had to be done so that these could replace not only one of the central ones of the engine, but also one of the lateral ones. To this end, it was necessary to modify the connections of the water pipes. And since this work lasted longer than I had anticipated, I was not ready to leave until August 5. But that day there was a water leak in the radiator. It had to be repaired.

Finally, on August 6th, after about three weeks, at 9.30 am, I left the waters of Sydney.



Savoia Marchetti S-16 taxiing on the Brisbane River, QLD in 1925 (State Library of QLD from https://aeropedia.com.au/

*Sydney to Thursday Island: 6-15 August

On the morning of August 6, the American fleet was also preparing to leave to return to America. Clouds of smoke came out of the chimneys of the ships; signals and flags were continuously hoisted on the masts, the cranes were all in motion to put the boats on deck, while some motorboats moved away from the docks, bringing on board the last, the reluctant to detach themselves from the bewitching Australian land.

I made a quick run along the mammoth ships, exchanging a last greeting with the officers, who were busy running up and down the decks. We set out in two different directions, after having, with some diversity of friends, fulfilled the same mission, bringing from the east and west the greetings of two friendly nations to the industrious and active Australian people.

I admired from above for the last time the fascinating city, limply stretched along the sinuous shores of Port Jackson, which reflected in its blue waters the smiling houses plunged into the green of the gardens.

The coast continued northwards, jagged and full of lakes and inlets: a truly admirable seaplane route. Thinking of the inhospitable coasts I had travelled before, I felt more secure and had almost the joy of one who makes a pleasure trip. It is true that some major difficulties awaited me later; But it was premature to think about it.

I had some little boredom immediately afterwards, because between Newcastle and Smoky Cape I found clouds, downpours and whirlwinds, but after Smoky Cape the weather cleared up again, and the wind from the south helped us to speed merrily towards Brisbane, where I arrived at 1.50 pm, covering in about four and a half hours the eight hundred kilometres that separate Brisbane from Sydney. We splashed down in the river in front of the Botanic Garden; There was no one to witness my arrival, for they had

calculated that I should arrive an hour later. Thank goodness: this time I hadn't disturbed anyone.

We had great difficulty, due to the strong current of the river, mooring the aircraft; then some motorboats came to help us, and so the manoeuvre was faster.

While I was busy with the moorings, I felt greeted by a voice that was not new. “Welcome, Commander!”

I turned around and saw again the aquiline profile of an old officer of mine who commanded one of my seaplane squadrons in Brindisi during the war. “You are here?”

“I'm here, Commander. Very happy to put myself at your command”.

With great happiness we shook hands and recalled the common life of the war. He had sailed the world far and wide, and, after changing perhaps a thousand trades, he was now in Brisbane, where his last occupation was the automobile industry. He immediately began to work with us, as in the good old days of activity, and was extremely useful to us.

While we were loading the supplies, I was urgently called aboard a tugboat. There was the Archbishop of Brisbane, (James Duhig), who had come there on purpose to give me his greeting. His moving words remained deeply engraved in my heart, because they were the spontaneous expression of a good and disinterested spectator.

9 August: Brisbane to Rockhampton

The following morning, at 9.15 am, I set off. The departure was rather difficult, because the river was narrow and full of traffic of the numerous ferry boats that crossed from one shore to the other, extending the city on both banks. The wind was not in a favourable direction, and I floated downwind in order to have enough space to take off. At a certain point a ferry boat cut me off. I had the wind in my tail and I couldn't steer it well. So I turned around to avoid it. The captain of the ferry boat in the meantime had turned his vessel back: I then turned again to pass, while the ferry moved in front of us and an inevitable collision occurred. I heard a crack, which had a sinister echo in my heart. Fortunately, my aircraft did not suffer serious damage: the bow and the left float had suffered a slight dent. Although the damage required repair, I still wanted to leave to take advantage of the favourable weather. Despite the insistence of the bystanders, including my old officer who, anxious and worried, had also rushed with a motorboat, I started the engine again, and at 9.40 I was in the air.

Due to the very dense layers of clouds, I increased in altitude to about two thousand meters and flew over the land to avoid a storm that threatened the coast. But after a while I understood that it was not convenient to persist with that direction taken, and descended under the clouds, lowering myself to thirty meters from the water, under violent showers of rain and between very strong jolts of the aircraft. For the rest of the journey I had good navigation along the coasts, now not so inhabited, but always pleasant and full of good shelters for a possible makeshift landing .

At 2.30 am I was in sight of Rockhampton, and at 1 pm I landed in the Fitzroy River, near a buoy, on which the Italian flag had been raised, and which had been specially prepared for my mooring at my request; since, now, from the experience gained on the previous voyage and from the numerous inconveniences I had had in landing in rivers of strong current, I always asked the local authorities to be pleased to let me find a buoy on arrival to facilitate my mooring.

At Rockhampton we were cordially received by the mayor and the people, who had never seen a seaplane. A boat of onlookers, dragged by the current, came against our aircraft, hitting the very boat that had suffered damage in the collision with the ferry boat before leaving Brisbane. Now it was really no longer possible to continue. But to make the necessary repair, the float had to be dismantled, and this operation required the aircraft to be put dry on the river bank. This was difficult as the bank was very rough, full of stones and steep; but I managed to find a place that seemed suitable to me and with the help of a rowing boat and a motorboat, I brought the seaplane there. However, while we were trying to moor it, a strong storm broke out, which made us find it very difficult to grab the hull, to prevent it from suffering further damage by hitting some of the numerous boats that were moored nearby. To top it all off, night fell; and except for two or three willing, all the others, who had begun to assist us, seeing the darkness and seeing the rain, had disappeared.

Between the wind, the current, the rain, the darkness and the unstable boats we used, soaked with water and dirty with mud up to our knees, we must have seemed like damned souls to pay for proud sins; And when, at last, all the work was done, I also had the beautiful consolation of noting that the place chosen was very dangerous, because of the stones on which the aircraft would have rested at low tide. We performed so new. but in reverse, the manoeuvre, which had already cost us two hours of fatigue of all kinds. We had to struggle a lot in the pitch black and on the inky black water, under the thin insistent drizzle, to track down our buoy, having a spark plug light as the only means of illumination.

At 9 pm, after that real work of Sisyphus, we were able to go ashore. I thanked the improvised collaborators for their sporting spirit and their valuable help, because, while for us that hard work was an absolute duty, for them it was instead a voluntary and spontaneous act of generous fraternity.

Despite having restricted dining opportunities, Rockhampton was a prosperous and modern city, even in 1825.

I must add that we had adopted the system of skipping breakfast because, arriving shortly after noon, the hours of daylight that could be used before sunset were often barely sufficient for mooring, checking the engine and refuelling. We took a few eggs to drink before leaving and took hard-boiled eggs, fruit and a little Port or Marsala with us

on board. We followed this system throughout the rest of the journey and had no reason to complain about it. That evening, however, given the painful work that had lasted uninterrupted since the morning, we had an unusual appetite. So we rushed to the hotel to have dinner.

“But the kitchen is closed at this hour,” he told us. Unfortunately, we had not thought of warning the owner of the hotel, as would have been appropriate, since in Australia, especially in small towns, there is the habit of having dinner at half past 5 or 6 in the afternoon.

We must certainly have shown a very desolate face to the unexpectedly unpleasant news, for the housekeeper of the hotel hastened to add: “But rest assured, we shall find something to eat”.

This something, then, consisted of a dish of oysters and some fruit. The oysters, in fact, were more than three hundred and the fact that they were served to us without shells helped us to ingest them almost without noticing their quantity. And this was the gastronomic record of the trip.

The following day I decided to dismantle the float to be repaired by placing two sandbags, as a counterweight on the opposite wing. Fortunately I found a very good carpenter in Rockhampton who specialised in repairing racing boats.

He set to work under a canopy at the Motorboat Club, surrounded by idlers and onlookers, with whom we exchanged all sorts of jokes. He did a magnificent job, and in the evening the float was tried and could be put back in place.

August 10 to Townsville

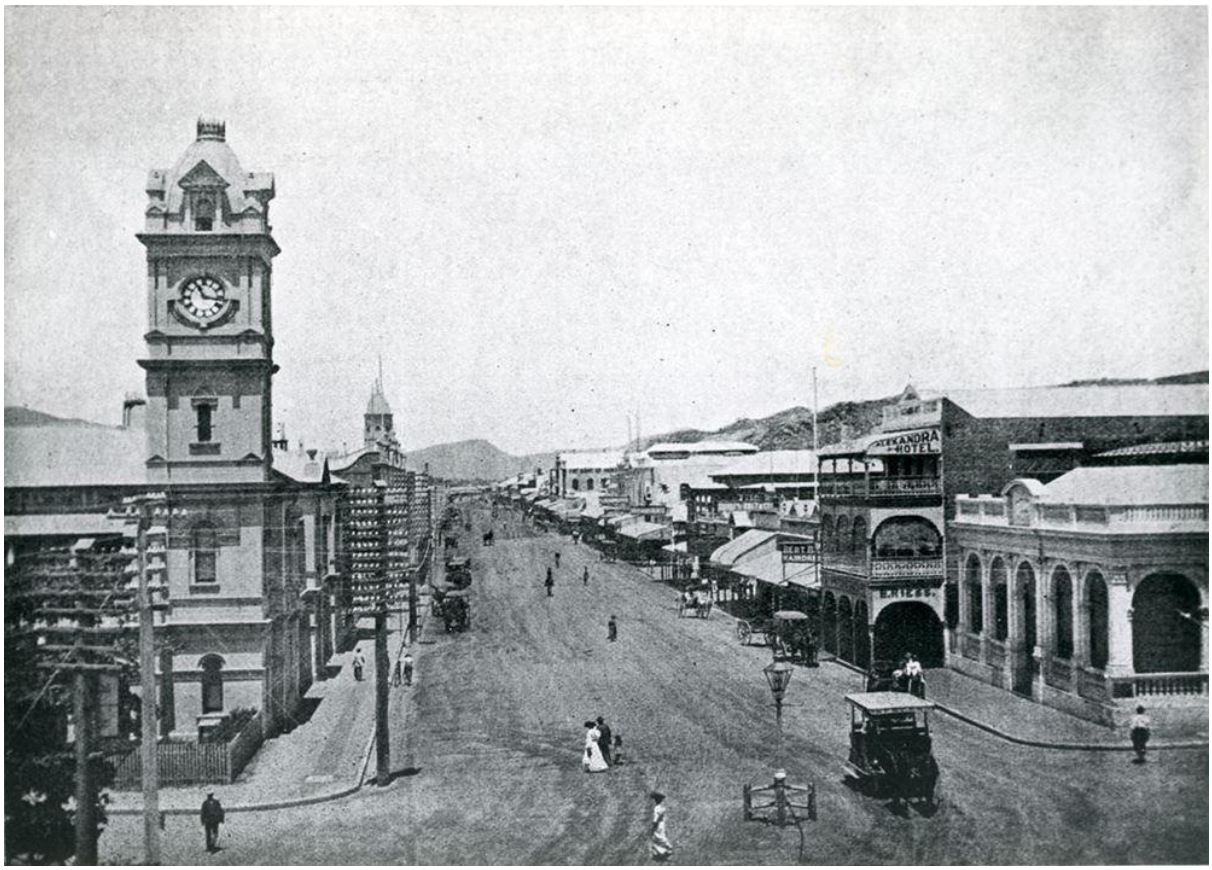
On August 9 it rained heavily and low clouds covered the hilly ground from view; I therefore decided to postpone my departure until the next day.

It was Sunday, and in the afternoon we dragged our melancholy boredom through the deserted streets of Rockhampton, under a gloomy and persistent drizzle, making plans for the next crossings.

On August 11 the weather was quite clear, and at 8.40 I left for the new stage which was less than 700 kilometres.

The coast turned towards the north-west and coral reefs began to be seen on the sea, emerging here and there in small rocky islets.

The city of Townsville appeared from above coquettish and laughing. It has the shape of a huge ring that surrounds a hill three hundred meters high on a base with a diameter of about two kilometres. The hill is bare of dwellings and has a wild and desolate appearance, strangely in contrast with the white houses that crowded at its slopes, giving a pleasant aspect of life and well-being.



Townsville was, in my itinerary the last Australian city, quite rich in resources.

Numerous crossings awaited me along the uninhabited and wild coasts or on deserted seas never crossed by ships.

In the event of a forced descent into the sea, it was to be expected if we were not immediately submerged, to have to spend many days and perhaps a few weeks adrift, on the water, before my small sail allowed me to reach the town not far away.

Rockhampton

I had a modest reserve of 8 kg of food in a hermetically sealed box. I thought it best to reinforce the reserve and bought about 20 kg on the spot. of provisions of various kinds, among which there was an abundance of preserved fruit which I believe may be the most pleasing and at the same time the most nutritious food for shipwrecked people.

I did have some hooks to fish, but I had to reckon with fish of good will who had kindly been caught by amateur and inexperienced fishermen like us.

The pleasant spring temperature, which we had enjoyed so far, was over: the heat began again, having already come considerably closer to the Equator.

At Townsville the Italian Consul received us with great effusion, and I asked him for information on the remaining coast of Queensland that we had left to travel.

I was interested in having some information about the Aborigines, whose last tribes still inhabit the forests of North Queensland and with whom, if we have a crash landing, we could possibly have had contact.

“There is not much to be feared,” said the Consul, “for the few surviving natives of Queensland, which is the region which houses the most important groups (in all Australia, it is known, they seem not to exceed 20,000), are scattered in the forests, where they lead a miserable and savage life, feeding on roots and worms. Few practice hunting and fishing. The persecutions and humiliations to which these aborigines were subjected on the part of the colonisers forced them to live in deserted and inaccessible places, which have certainly not improved their social conditions. Yet I believe that, perhaps more than other savage peoples, this race would be susceptible of considerable and even interesting progress, owing to certain physical characteristics of it which are unmatched in other regions of the earth, such as the perfection of the senses of hearing and smell. Perhaps with a wise direction and an intelligent education some remarkable result could be obtained from these people, making a contribution to the! Science has those extraordinary gifts. They live in caves or in small huts made of leafy branches, or even in the shelter of a screen of leaves, which can be moved according to the direction of the sun or the wind. Because of misery they sacrifice many newborns to death, and this will soon lead to the complete disappearance of this breed. They are very superstitious and have very strange ceremonies, dances and rituals. One of the rites takes place when boys are judged to be of mature age to acquire the name of men. They are taken to a kind of sacred mountain where, in the presence of the elders of the tribe, they are blindfolded and subjected to strange exorcisms, amidst tumultuous dances. They must therefore undergo hair cutting, complete hair removal, the tearing of two incisor teeth, the perforation of the nasal septum in which a wooden bar is passed, while the face is painted black. Thus tanned, they are left alone for some time, and, after hair and hair have grown back, they undergo incisions on the skin, made with pieces of quartz and in order to obtain deep scars, then brought to suppuration to obtain greater decorative effects. After this ceremony and other tortures the patient is declared a man and can take a wife.

“If he is not dead”.

“Yes, if he is not dead”.

“But at the end of the day, how can we be welcomed in the event of an involuntary visit?”

“I would advise you to avoid contact with them. They are people beyond the control of any authority and there are stories of ferocity and cannibalism, truly incredible, which occurred in the past against whites”.

“I understand: it is better to keep away”.

After this I became convinced that it had been wise to have increased the provisions of provisions, for in any case the desert sea was preferable to treacherous land.

I found in Townsville very insistent invitations from the various Italian Colonies of Queensland who wanted to see us, and therefore I decided to split the next Townsville Cooktown stop in two to stop for a day in Innisfail, which was the centre where Italian immigrants were most abundant.

August 11 to Innisfail; Italian settlers’ welcome

I set out on the morning of the 1st and after a short flight I alighted into the Johnstone River at Innisfail. We were welcomed with great enthusiasm by the numerous compatriots and local authorities. But, as soon as we disembarked, Ernesto and I were assailed by headaches and persistent rheumatic pains: who knows if it was not a late effect of Rockhampton's gastronomic record!

This, however, with our faces yellow from the internal disorder of our bodies, we had to give a good impression at the receptions and banquets offered to us as a mark of great esteem.

During the day we had to visit a mill for the grinding of sugar cane, to the cultivation of which the Italians of Queensland are especially dedicated.

I remember that it was a very tiring trip because the mill was far away and the road or, rather, the path to reach it so rough and upset, that the car almost overturned; and in one of the violent jolts of the car I suffered a slight bruise: something that had never happened to me in an aeroplane.

In the warehouse of the mill huge piles of sacks full of sugar were piled up, and this was due to the strike of the waterside workers, which had lasted for many weeks and prevented exports. The sugar production of Queensland, I was told, was beyond the needs of Australia, but it could not be exported because of the high price caused by the high cost of labour. In order not to lose so much wealth, the government provided for exports, selling below cost and losing the difference in price.

From the Northern Herald (Cairns, Qld)Wednesday 19 August 1925,

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DE PINEDO'S FLIGHT

CIVIC RECEPTION AT INNISFAIL SHIRE HALL. AIRMEN LEAVE FOR COOK-TOWN TO-DAY.

Innisfail, Tuesday

The Italian airman, Marchese De Pinedo, who is flying around Australia in his seaplane, and who is en route to Tokyo, arrived at Innisfail this morning shortly after 11 o'clock, from Townsville, accomplishing the journey of 150 miles in under two hours.

The seaplane was visible a long way off, and a crowd assembled on the Esplanade to watch the landing. Pinedo circled for a while over the town and then headed seawards across the country known as the Innisfail estate after which he turned and made a graceful descent to the Johnstone River, where an anchorage was effected.

The aviators were accorded a civic reception in the Shire Hall at noon, where there was a large gathering, amongst whom were prominent Innisfail citizens, also many Italian residents of the district. The Chairman of the Johnstone Shire Council, Cr. R. D. Bliss, presided, and after the healths of the Kings of England and Italy were honored, Mr. Bliss welcomed the Marchese De Pinedo, on behalf of the citizens of the district. (He lauded the bravery of he airmen and the promise of a wonderful future for aviation, and other prominent people also spoke,for example 'a councillor:Aroplanes had been brought into commercial use, and a great benefit to civilisation was a result, the only regret was that when he (Mr. Steine), was in Townsville, recently, he did not have the opportunity of returning with the airman to Innisfail. (Smiles). He also regretted that their stay was so short. They would not be able to see the whole of the fertile Johnstone River district, which was one of the richest corners of Australia. He wished the aviators all success in their flight, and that their record would be written in history as something achieved in the cause of civilisation (Applause). Other leading citizens also spoke, including Mr J T McNamee, who said he was in a position to know the difficulties associated with flying as on the other side of the world he had flown a considerable distance across country well mapped out, but the visiting airmen had flown hundreds of miles over a vast ocean route, of which they had previously known nothing, and without any escort. It was very fitting that the citizens should be there that day to compliment these aviators on the risks they had surmounted and to congratulate them on their success on their arrival at Innisfail. These men had taken a route to Australia never previously attempted. Marchese De Pinedo, responding, said he was very pleased to land at Innisfail at the kind invitation of the people to visit this part of North Queensland. He thanked them on behalf of himself and his companion for their kindly welcome. He could assure them that Australia was very well known in Italy, and the Australian people were appreciated there. Australians had made great sacrifices during the war and he had visited the Australian cemetery at Gallipoli, where lay the remains of the gallant Anzacs who had

fought, bled and died for civilisation. He was a great admirer of Sir Ross Smith, who made the first Europe to Australia flight. He was very pleased to visit Innisfail because here were a number of Italians working with Australians for the civilisation of this portion of the great continent. Queensland was one of the best and most beautiful countries he had seen on his travels, and no doubt an unbounded future lay ahead of this State. He was very sorry that his stay here would be so short, and he would always remember their kind welcome. He spoke for himself and companion when he wished the Innisfail people all success. The aviators left this evening for Mourilyan by car, where they were entertained by hundreds of their Italian compatriots of that district.

SOUTH JOHNSTONE SUGAR MILL, INNISFAIL

That evening we also had a dance held in a wooden shack, and where there was also a fight between two about a no-show.

As soon as I could, I returned to the hotel, which was also built of wooden planks, with small rooms like convent cells. I had a little fever and therefore took some quinine and aspirin. I had a night agitated by dreams of all kinds: it seemed to me that the savages wanted to do the operation of which the consul had told me, and that I could save myself by giving them a sack of sugar!

The next morning I felt a little better, I put on more clothes than usual and I left lnnisfail amidst the applause and good wishes of those good Italians, who with a life of hardship and sacrifice built the foundations of their future well-being.

The distant homeland was alive in the hearts of those lost children at the edge of the world. They regarded the aircraft as a vital piece of their native land, and throughout the night some watched about it as if it were a sacred thing.

My presence in Innisfail meant that the homeland cared for them and had not forgotten them.

It was a sign, an invisible bond of love and faith carried on the wind across thousands and thousands of kilometres.

August 12 to Cooktown

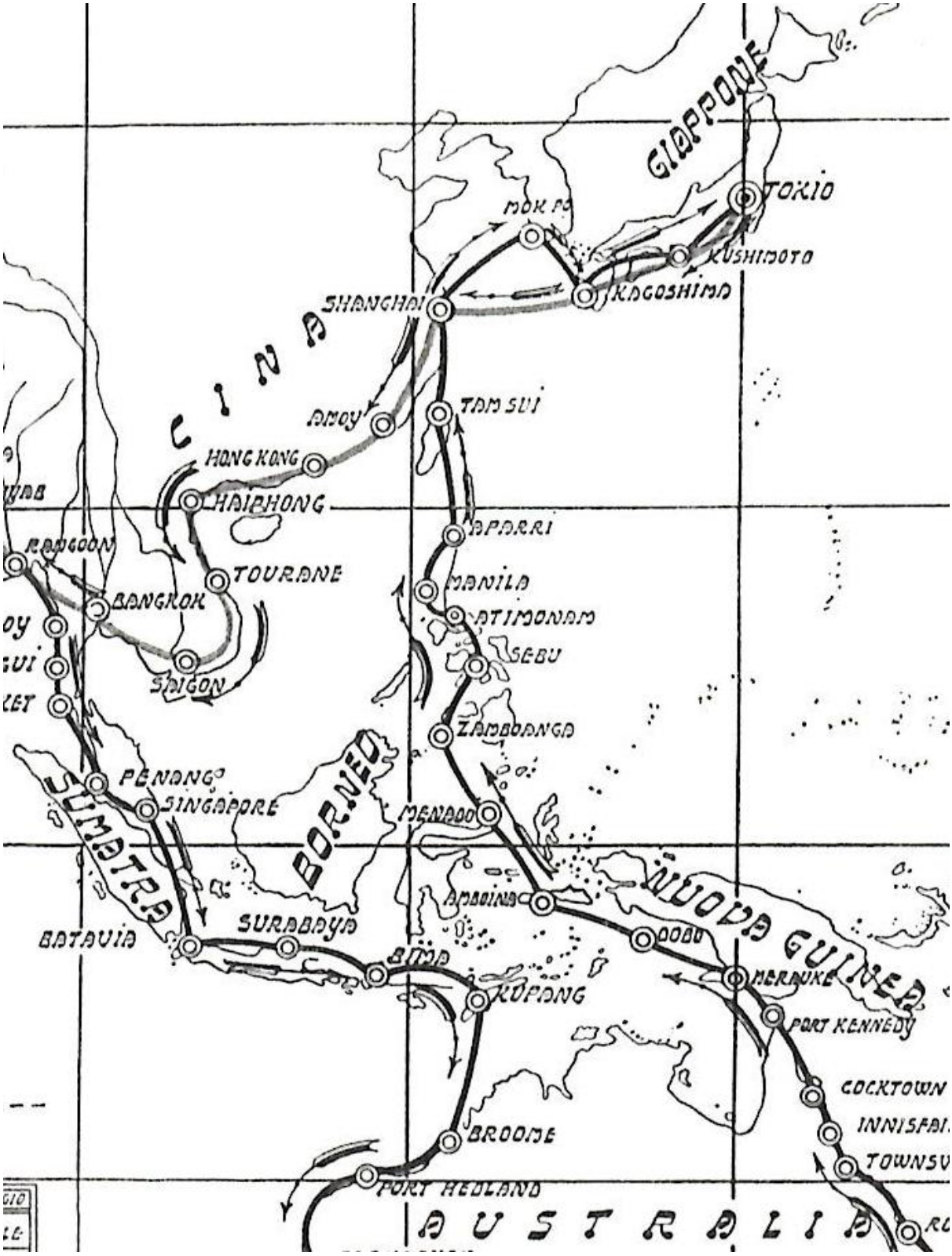
The flight to Cooktown was short and peaceful, but the landing was not so peaceful, because strong wind changes quickly due to the local conditions and the fairly cool trade winds from the south-east produced continuous gusts, which assumed great violence. But what made the landing manoeuvre delicate and difficult were the continuous changes of the gusts that changed alternately in their direction by about 90°. So it happened to me that while I was about to touch water I was hit by a strong gust of wind on the right side, and had to speed up, turn 90° degrees to the right and land in the new direction. I ran the plane aground on the beach, with the intention of leaving immediately, but it was not possible because, given the very scarce local resources, the refuelling took us longer than expected.

On the beach came to greet me, among others, a very strange man, old and decrepit, but still sufficiently smart. After much hardship, I was able to understand what he was saying to me in an almost incomprehensible jargon. He was a Milanese, who had been in Australia for about forty years. He worked in the early days in a gold mine. Then the mine was abandoned, because the costs of extraction for the cost of labour had cancelled its performance. He was now living in Cooktown the last days of his life, subsidised by the government. He spoke a very curious mixture of English and the Milanese dialect. His eyes shone with joy to see a compatriot again after so many years of isolation.

Cooktown is the last township in the North of Australia. After that, up to Cape York, there is no longer any inhabited centre. Even there they told me to be careful if I had to go down along the route to Thursday Island, because the natives were not to be trusted.

In the afternoon the wind increased with violent and sudden gusts. Worried about the aircraft, we worked two hours to reinforce the moorings, using a large anchor that I could get on the spot. Fortunately, the hotel was close to the shore and I could keep an eye on the seaplane from my room window. During the night, hearing the wind blowing stronger at times, I got up several times to go to the veranda and observe the condition of the aircraft.

*Thursday Island to Tokyo 13 August to 17 October



Map 4:Singapore - Australia – Tokyo - Rangoon

In the morning, at 6 am, the weather was very dark and windy. I went on board, and weighed anchor, causing myself to drift with the engine stopped downwind. When I was

off the ground at a convenient distance to take off, I anchored again to start the engine. There was short and broken sea, and take-off was therefore very difficult. Abandoning the anchor cable, I gave the engine full power, running against the wind and exposing myself to violent waves; But I managed to go to the step, running close to the shore. I had to make, running on the water at about 80 kilometres of speed, a 120° turn, miraculously avoiding hitting a sign that marked the place of a shoal. I found myself thus against the land, but by good fortune I was able to take a canal by thread, running on which, in calm water but hit from the stern by the gusts, I managed, after having travelled about two and a half kilometres, to put myself in the air. Tossed by the wind, the aircraft, as soon as it was lifted, had very violent leaps, which brought me back almost to the water, but at last I was able to gain altitude and present myself against the wind. It was 7 o'clock; The weather was bad and it rained from time to time.

At a quarter past 8 I was at Cape Meltin. Here I left the coast, heading north, and following a line of coral reefs. At 9.10 I found myself at Cape Direction. The weather had improved slightly, but soon became dark again with fairly strong gusts of wind, between East and Southeast. At 10:40 am I was on Newcastle Bay, and finally, at 11 am, on Thursday Island, where I alighted near a buoy that had been prepared for me. The sea was very rough because there was not enough shelter. Waves splashed over me while I was adrift waiting for a motorboat to take me in tow. In such conditions I drifted on the buoy, of which I knocked down the flag with my wings, fortunately without suffering damage.

From the motorboat (by the grace of God there was one) I had myself towed to a position more sheltered from the south-east wind, under Horn Island, because where I was, in the sea so rough, it was not possible to refuel.

The weather threatened to get worse. They told me that the previous day the wind had reached a speed of 50 km. per hour!

I then thought of leaving without delay to get out of that difficult port open to the wind. Here too the take-off was very complicated. I had myself towed downwind by the motorboat, and at 1.45 pm, after receiving violent blows, I was back in the air.

Along Papua and the Moluccas

Australia, this bright land of a beneficial climate, of hospitable people, of a gay and smiling life, now entered the realm of memories. A thick mist soon hid its last islands from my view.

The crossing of the Torres Strait, from Thursday lsland to Merauke, was just 320 kilometres, but the route took was over the sea, with no boats because of the uncertain seabed and the numerous coral reefs that make navigation dangerous.

The sky was overcast and the wind was fresh from the South-East. Due to large clusters of clouds, visibility was very poor. On the sea there was no sign of life to be seen. After about an hour and a half I sighted the coast of New Guinea or Papua; a low land with

very thick vegetation. Immense shallows extended from the shore for several kilometres offshore.

Merauke

Following the coast, at 3:20 pm, I arrived at the estuary of the Merauke River, on the left bank of which stands a small village.

From above you could see two or three civil-looking houses in an enclosure that I later learned belonged to the radiotelegraph station. A few more houses along a road, the only one in the village, and then all huts hidden in the trees. Around, as far as the eye can see, rich forests with tropical plants, but not a sign of human life.

The sun shone in the sky; That small group of houses, so isolated from the civilised world, had a strange effect as if it were a distant hermitage.

Numerous groups of natives, prostrate on the ground or hidden under the trees, looked ecstatically at the strange spectacle of this noisy bird that came to disturb their peace.

I alighted after a quick turn.

The Dutch Resident and two missionaries came immediately under the board in a boat.

There was no motor boat on the estuary of the river, and as the boat ploughed, we were towed by a line of five native canoes, which rowed with short paddles. During this manoeuvre a large Malay raft, tossed by the wind and the current, came upon us, forcing us to struggle a great deal to get rid of it.

We secured the aircraft near the landing wharf and went ashore, where we were surprised by a very strange sight.

The population of Merauke was composed almost exclusively of Papuans belonging to the Kaia Kaia tribe. There were also a few Malays. Only a few years ago a small Dutch garrison had been established, consisting of a Resident and a few missionaries. The whites in all were no more than twenty.

The natives immediately crowded around us, looking at us with an astonished air. The missionaries had long since announced the arrival of some men in flight, but they, in spite of the confidence they had in those reverend fathers, whom they greatly respected, would not believe that men could fly.

They approached us cautiously and touched our flying clothes, confabulating with each other and winking.

Completely naked, with the skin of a black ebony, they had on nothing but a few necklaces of stones and shells. The men also wore large trophies of colourful feathers on their heads.

That evening we were guests of the Malay Raja, to whom depended the district of Merauke, which includes the whole coast of the South of Dutch possession of New Guinea.

The missionaries told me that the tribe of the Kaia Kaia, living in the village, practiced cannibalism until a few years ago, but that this brutal custom had been stopped for the propaganda of their mission and the intervention of the Dutch government; nevertheless, some cases happened from time to time.

The missionary who was in charge told me that a few months earlier he had had to make an excursion into the interior with a caravan of natives. and that unfortunately during the journey a boy of about 14 years old had fallen from a tree and died instantly. Well, the following day the missionary realised with horror that the members of the caravan had in their saddlebags, as travel provisions, various pieces of the poor wretch's corpse. The missionaries told us that, although these people were in such a state of brutality, they were not of deficient intellectual qualities, and some boys, whom the missionaries with great care and love educated in a small school, showed themselves to be endowed with normal intelligence.

The Kaia Kaia, like the other tribes of New Guinea, can practically be considered to be at the stage of civilisation corresponding to the Stone Age. In fact, they do not know iron at all and work their pirogues with fire and stone tools. The only weapons they use are arrows, which they shoot with bamboo bows with great skill and at very great distances. They are made of a thin reed with serrated bone for the tip, so that it is difficult to extract them from the body that has been hit by them. They are even able to kill birds in flight. They light the fire by means of a wooden rod, which they spin very quickly with their hands, holding one end against the ground on dry grasses. The operation is long and tiring and for it you need three men to take turns. The various tribes of New Guinea live in continuous war with each other, so much so that the villages are all built on stilts, at the upper end of which the stairs in the houses are withdrawn in the evening, in order to protect themselves from a treacherous enemy attack while sleeping. It is the opinion of the natives that eating a man leads to complete mastery of his qualities. A man is all the more esteemed the more heads he has cut off, and therefore the more mature warriors of the tribe hunt down men of other tribes to cut off their heads, which they hang in their huts as a trophy.

Society lives in a completely communist regime. There is no form of currency and no form of exchange. Every man procures by hunting animals and his fellow men, what he needs to live.

The appearance of the Kaia Kaia was extremely repulsive; so much so that having posed among them for a photograph, I couldn't wait for the photographer to finish his task. They painted their teeth black and their lips red; several rings are hung on the nostrils and to the earlobes, which due to that weight stretch improbably. The most elegant also wear wild boar teeth fixings on their nostrils.

They assured me that along the coast there were villages and some missionaries everywhere; but the area further west, that is, between the Marianna Strait and Cape Walsch, was not yet explored; and they advised me to throw myself, in case of damage,

rather into the sea than into land, because here they could not assure me of what might happen.

I probably would have been respected as a deity; but in this case I might have had some trouble with the sorcerers... out of jealousy by profession. What did not persuade me, however, was the possibility of being forced, if necessary, to eat Papuan ribs.

Reaction of the locals

I leave the floor here to Father Peter Vertenten, one of the missionaries who kindly assisted me, who describes the impressions of the Kaia-Kaia on the stay of "Gennariello" in Merauke as follows:

"What do you say, Father? A machine that flies... But possible?... And how is it made? And who pushes it? And how does it stand? And"when will he come?... I let you imagine the shirts that I had to sweat to satisfy the curiosity of my amiable parishioners.

Because, for some time, it had been announced to us that De Pinedo had to alight or land in our vicinity. It was expected during the month of May.

This date passed: but of the longed-for "Gennariello", not even the shadow.

A second dispatch brings us the news that he would come "on June 6. Black and white traders, Malays and Guineians "had made it their duty to come and settle temporarily at Merauke to observe the prodigious aircraft closely June and July passed, with nothing at all.

"The whites have mocked us," said the Kaia-Kaia. "They always want to put us in the bag with their vaunted skills. We were ignorant, believing that men can fly like our birds of paradise...".

"No," I answered, "it's true, we don't deceive you. You will see that he will come".

I wanted more than them to see the famous aviators arrive, also so as not to be seen as a liar. My reputation!

And here on August 13 a gloomy noise, more and more thunderous and threatening, raises the noses of my savages, high up, "on the side of Boreas. A black spot is clearly distinguished, approaching, gradually enlarging, and spinning with dizzying speed.

The women intent on collecting shells rush towards the village.

"The flying machine! The flying machine". The seaplane passed by like an arrow, roaring with such a noise as to deafen the ears.

My lovely head-cutters thought it advisable to hide themselves in some thicket or land. In some cases the fear is nstinctive, even in New Guinea. Then, almost laughing at their fright, realising that the machine had disappeared after two minutes, they put wings on their legs, and ran off towards Merauke, where it was known that the aircraft would alight . In the street they danced and jumped like crazy.

"The machine flies like a 'dema' (spirit).' Have you heard how much noise the machine keeps in its belly?..".

The Savoia lay quietly in the bay of Merauke, right next to the pier.

“Look, Father. Before she made a lot of noise, when she was in the air, and now she is silent. You can see that before he was hungry and now he has eaten…”.

With this and other sublime reflections, my Kaia-Kaia really celebrated the seaplane and the two nice “aviators”.

The airmen arrived suddenly, but they found help and assistance everywhere.

High fashion at Merauke, New Guinea, visited 16 August.

In the evening, the town hall (let's call it that) of the Kaia-Kaia, was transformed into a reception room, with garlands, flags and flags among which stood out, and seemed with a legitimate touch of pride, the Italian colours.

The decorations made in a hurry, since De Pinedo had arrived around three in the afternoon, turned out to be something chic. Even the lunch was well taken care of and there was neither joviality nor a final concert that helped digestion.

They welcomed Commander De Pinedo and his faithful Ernesto also in the name of cannibals”.

I wonder if anyone has found nowhere else more enthusiastic and sympathetic welcome. They did not cease to contemplate us from head to foot, and to make endless whistles of admiration.

Towards 10.30, the following telegram arrived from Dobo: ”Favourable weather and wind”

We took leave quickly and cordially.

An immense crowd massed towards the platforms to see the two extraordinary men taking flight again. The wait is “feverish.

The engine wobbles, the aircraft shakes, the water splashes everywhere: the natives, astonished by the violence of that initial effort, hold their breath. Some would bravely want to escape, but there is a lot of crowd!

The powerful aircraft runs, jumps over the water, detaches... Here he is in the air very agile, quivering, bursting in.

Women scream and scream like terrified children. No one can take their eyes off the strange and mammoth bird.

The Savoy describes an elegant curve on the other side of the bank, mounts and says goodbye to Mérauke one last time. Ernesto is still standing on the lower wing. De Pinedo sends a last farewell with a gesture, and the “kapal-terbang” (the flying pig) disappears in the direction of Dobo, towards the west.

It was a truly solemn moment. Our natives were amazed. For that evening and for many consecutive others only the flying machine could be mentioned.

“Kapal-terbang, aah... Ooh!... eeh... Father, we don't want any more boats: we just want the kapal-terbang! We know how to talk about nothing else. But what a noise it made! rrrrrrrrrrr And how will that car stay in the air without sticks? When he climbed up into the air, my belly trembled...”.

The Keiesi, who speak and read Malay, from the flight of De Pinedo, who has been the only subject of their conversation for weeks and weeks, have drawn another conclusion:

“It is really crazy to want to compete with whites. If we drive them out of our islands by land and sea, they return to our ribs in the air..”.

Now readers will be curious to know the honour with which our Kaia-Kaia wanted to award Commander de Pinedo. The world aviator has collected them almost everywhere, of titles and decorations; but our cannibals have been able to overcome all imagery, giving it nothing less the nomination of..... ‘grand honorary flying pig of New Guinea.'

And if you don't cry....

I would gladly have stayed a day at Merauke to see a dance which the savages wished to perform in our honour. But the weather report radiotelegraphed by Dobo was decent, and I decided not to delay any longer.

Very seldom during my journey had I been able to get news of the weather conditions on the route before leaving, and this because of the difficulties of communication by ordinary means. In Australia, in fact, I used, in some cases, the bulletins of the time that were published by the newspapers.

But here the Dutch Admiral, resident in Batavia, had very courteously arranged for the radiotelegraph stations, the only means of communication between the Moluccas and New Guinea, to facilitate me as far as I might need.

The Resident of Merauke had also given me this speech the day before:

“Our Admiral at Batavia has given me orders to inform you that he puts at your disposal a unit of the Navy currently in Dobo. I therefore ask you to let me know at what point on your route to Dobo you want this vessel to go to bring you assistance, if necessary, and I will immediately transmit the relevant orders”.

“I appreciate very much,” I replied, “your Admiral's chivalrous and kind offer, but I have no need of any escort vessel.

“But if by chance, God forbid, you are forced to alight…”.

“The trade winds will take me to the Aru Islands anyway. We have a sail and enough food”.

On the morning of the 14th, while I was waiting from Dobo for the radio telegram concerning the weather conditions, I visited a collection of local curiosities, which the doctor of the mission had collected.

Several skulls, which he himself had taken from some of the huts of the natives, a large stuffed crocodile and another small one, alive in a tub, some parrots, birds of paradise and other things formed the small museum.

I brought with me as a souvenir a bow and some arrows, which I inserted in the tail of the aircraft.

Dobo

The population, which had increased during the night, many having come from a neighbouring village, was all stationed on the shore.

After a false start, at noon I floated into the air under the astonished eyes of the Papuans.

I was separated from Dobo, my next stop, about 800 kilometres, of which the first 300 up to Cape Walsch, along the coast of New Guinea, and the others on the open sea.

Before setting out on course, I made a run over an alignment that I had previously studied to determine the compass course that was to take me to Dobo. I groped along the coast to Cape Walsch above the clouds that completely deprived me of the view of the land, I glimpsed from a break in the clouds Princess Marianne Strait.

At about 2 pm, when I assumed I was at the height of Cape Valsch, I went into the clouds and followed compass bearing 300° that was to lead me to my goal.

The weather, after about an hour, cleared up somewhat, but I found large mountains along the way that forced me to change altitude several times. Every now and then you could see the sea, which indicated wind from the South-East. At about 4 pm I sighted land below me through a large gap and I was able to check that I was exactly above the

Workai channel, which divides Kobrur Island from Maikur Island of the Aru group, on which my route was directed. I was very pleased to have found myself so accurately. I then passed under the clouds, through some rain and at 4.30 pm I landed in Dobo.

The sea was somewhat rough, and so I had the usual shower while mooring at the stern of the yacht “Szalum” of the Dutch Navy, which was stationed in the harbour, specially sent to Dobo by the Dutch Admiral, just in case.

Picture from Leiden University collection, thought to be Dobo

I am very pleased to be able to point out here the highly sporting and generous spirit of this admiral.

In Dobo the Malay Raja and the predominantly Malay population received us with great enthusiasm, for they had never seen an aircraft. There were also many Japanese.

The country's main asset was the pearl industry. They showed me several, including a beautiful one recently caught, which alone accounted for the whole cost of my expedition. That evening the governor offered us a banquet, which was also attended by some Australians, who were there precisely for the pearl trade.

The weather was rainy and the following morning it was not very easy to start the engine, certainly in a bad mood because he did not want to leave; so much so that it took a good half hour of obstinate attempts to succeed in the purpose.

Ambonia: rebuilt fuel injection

Between Dobo and Amboina, my next stop, the distance was 750 kilometres and the route here too was completely on the sea. There was wind between East and South-East, and rough seas.

Before leaving, I did the usual compass check and set course for the IOs, applying a slight correction to the left to compensate for the drift due to the wind.

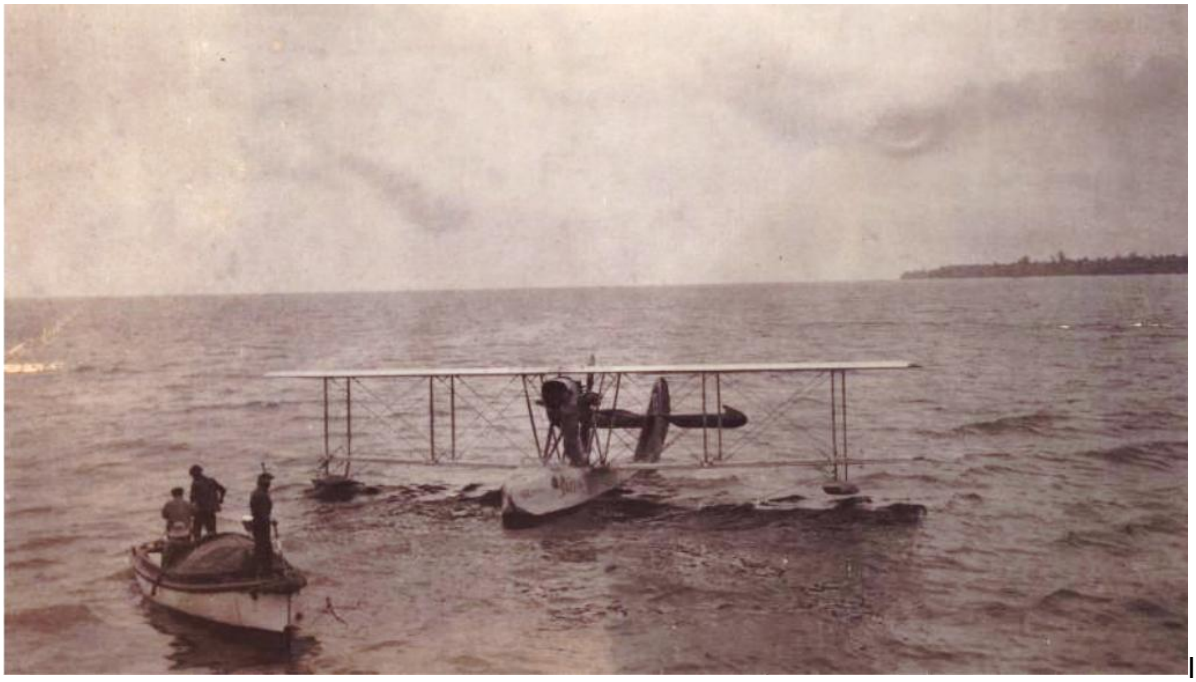
I passed over the Vatubela Islands and in sight of Banda, where I had been advised to descend, being a splendid and pleasant place. But I couldn't waste time.

After about three and a half hours of navigation, finding myself at an altitude of two thousand meters, above a large mass of clouds, and considering myself in the vicinity of the island of Nusa Laut, which is the extreme east of the group to which Amboina belongs, I alighted under the clouds so as not to find myself against any mountain. Unfortunately I couldn't have chosen a worse moment, and as soon as I passed below I found myself in a very violent rain that did not allow me to see beyond 50 meters and forced me to fly about 10 meters above the water. It was a real deluge.

I then turned westwards, in which direction I was sure I would find no land, and went on for a quarter of an hour, after which I turned 90° to the left, and came southwards in the opposite direction to that towards which the land must have been; I did so to get out of the storm, but I was somewhat worried because the already reduced gasoline did not allow me to deviate much from the route. The rough sea below us did not give much hope in the event of a forced landing . After a while, the storm having decreased in intensity, I pulled back to the west, and finally in a slight clearing to the north I sighted land.

I immediately headed towards it and recognized that I was near the island of Nusa Laut, on which my course was directed. I left the storm on the left and passed south of the islands of Saparua and Haruku towards Amboina, at an altitude varying between 200 and 500 meters. At a quarter past 2 pm I finally entered the port of Amboina, where for the moment it was not raining and there was no wind, but I was struck on the other hand by vortices of incredible violence, which stopped my engine for a few moments, shaking the aircraft with strong jolts.

At 2.30 pm we landed in front of the landing pier of Amboina, adorned with flags and green trophies of leaves.



Ambon: Collection of Leiden University

At Ambon we refuelled immediately, but Ernesto warned me that a valve on the right cylinder of the engine was faulty, so it was prudent to change it. I decided to have the work done at once, and therefore prepared to put the aircraft ashore on the beach; a manoeuvre which we performed the following day at 8 o'clock in the morning, as soon as we could take advantage of the high tide.

Ernesto immediately began the disassembly of the pair of cylinders to which the damaged valve belonged, and it was verified that the seat of it was slightly deformed;

For this reason I considered it desirable to change the pair of cylinders with the new one I had brought with me on board. Ernesto bet with one of the Dutch non-commissioned officers present that the engine would be ready on the evening of the same day. The other said it was impossible.

Ernesto then set to work relentlessly. It was very hot and occasionally rained. I had a tent laid over the engine, close to which we could work at best even in the rain.

Night fell and lamps were mounted to continue the work. The non-commissioned officer who had gambled and who at first smiled with disbelief, now no longer smiled. All those who for one reason or another were involved in mechanics had gathered on the beach to witness the prodigy: the prodigy of a single man, who in the space of a day disassembles and reassembles an engine of 450 horsepower.

At 10 pm the miracle was accomplished: the engine had been reassembled!

A spontaneous “hurrah” gushed from the throats of those present when Ernesto, drenched in sweat, exhausted by hard work, jumped off the aircraft, saying: “Finished!”

On the morning of the 17th, however, it was not possible to leave immediately because, while reassembling the engine, one of the valves for injecting the fuel into the cylinders had broken. We had no spare on board; On the other hand, this valve was very small and delicate. It was a trinket, a trifle, but even without it you couldn't start, since it was not possible to start the engine. The matter was rather serious and at the same time grotesque, for it might seem absurd that for such a trifling thing one should remain stationary for how long. Ernesto could not do anything, because he lacked the delicate tools and the metal necessary for repair.

I thought then that perhaps a watchmaker or a goldsmith might be in a position to do the work. There was nothing in the country but a Chinese adjuster of clocks and old clocks. I went to his scramble. He had a small goldsmith's welder: we were safe!

The Dutch officers, who had accompanied me, and I began to act as assistants: the poor man had never had such distinguished assistants!

Meanwhile, many curious people crowded in front of the shop. and the police had to intervene to restore circulation.

The poor devil was so worried, and trembled so much with emotion, that he had to do the work three times.

At 11 am the work was ready. That shop had never had such celebrity, and the good craftsman, I was told, said that he would add to his sign a sign as follows: “Aeroplanes are repaired”.

August 18: Ambonia to Menarlo

At 12 o'clock I tried to take off; but, as the aircraft was too heavy, two repeated attempts failed; I then decided to go back to land, where I unloaded about 50 litres of gasoline. I was therefore forced to postpone the departure to the following day, especially since I would have had to cover a stage of 750 kilometres, and being in the middle of the rainy

season, it was not convenient to arrive at sunset. On August 18 I had the aircraft, lightened of some of the gasoline, towed downwind to a convenient position; and after a first attempt at take-off, which failed due to a magneto that had become wet, I made a second attempt which succeeded. At 8.45 am I left the roadstead of Amboina, and set the bow for 330°.

At 9.12 I passed between the islands of Buru and Ceram. I checked the position, correcting the course 10° to the left, to compensate for the south-westerly wind. At 10.30 am, on the traverse of Lisamatula, I changed course for 335°, the wind direction having changed. I was flying at an altitude of about 1500 meters, nor could I have flown at a lower altitude, which I would have preferred, given the high temperature that would not have allowed me sufficient cooling of the radiator.

I was in the sea off the Moluccas between the Celebes and the group of Gilolo, out of sight of any land. At 11 am I encountered a bank of clouds, which extended to over 2000 meters in height and reached almost as far as the water. I could not pass below, forced as I was not to be able to fly at a lower altitude for the reason mentioned above, and on the other hand I did not want to increase the number of revolutions excessively to pass over that bench, precisely so as not to excessively test the engine which, being already old, required a lot of care in use. Then I threw myself into the clouds, and flew about half an hour into them in a very distressing situation, for the fog and dampness were so thick that I could scarcely distinguish the tips of the wings; while all the instruments inside the nacelle were almost invisible, because they were completely veiled by the condensation of humidity.

Sometimes it happened to me that I found myself with the aircraft completely in a dive with the whole engine; sometimes I also happened to deviate so much from the course that I had to make a complete turn of the horizon to get back in place.

Navigation demanded continuous effort and did not admit the slightest distraction; and in these conditions I crossed the Equator, which I had thought of baptising with a bottle of Champagne brought on board; but the circumstances of the time and my other concerns did not allow me the traditional ceremony.

Coming out of the clouds, I found an area of heavy rain. It was 12.30 pm; I must not have been far from the earth now.

Menarlo, to which I was headed, was in the extreme north-west of the island of Celebes, and before reaching it I would have had to travel at least fifty kilometres above land, from the east coast to the west coast of the island, between mountains of more than 2000 meters high. But I could not fly myself into the mountains with that thick curtain of clouds, and therefore, because of the rain and mist that hid the view of the land from me, I decided to come to starboard, on a course parallel to the course of the coast, until the visibility conditions allowed me to head back to land with greater safety.

I flew for about twenty minutes, but I was very worried that I would run out of fuel, because the course I had taken did not bring me closer to my goal. I then came to the

left again, in the rain, bringing myself about thirty yards above the water, and flew in the direction of the coast. I was lucky, because shortly after the weather became a little lighter, although it was always rainy. and I sighted a thin strip of land on the bow. I was exactly at the extreme north-eastern edge of the island of Celebes, according to my calculations.

As I approached the coast, I found the weather still cloudy, but drier. I crossed the Bangka Strait and cut land towards Menado. At 5.30 pm I alighted into the roadstead in front of the city.

A large audience crowded onto the beach waiting for me to go down there. But at the first boat that came on board, I explained that I could not go to the place prepared for my mooring, and that I needed instead to be towed into the small estuary north of Menarlo, where the aircraft could remain calmer and more sheltered from the sea. But the tugboat persisted in taking me to the beach. I then moored my boat to a buoy and went down to the bank, where I was received by the representative of the Dutch Governor, to whom I explained the necessity I had of changing mooring, and so I returned on board and was towed to the estuary of the river. The whole manoeuvre lasted two and a half hours, especially because of the great annoyance produced by the boats of onlookers that crowded that space of sea.

When we went to measure the level of gasoline in the tanks, we were very surprised: there was not a drop left! We had taken a big risk, all the more so for having covered the last few kilometres on fumes; but if I hadn't done so, I wouldn't have arrived at my destination.

As the weather seemed good enough to be able to proceed to Zamboanga, they worked hard in the afternoon for refuelling; We had to overcome the strong resistance of the inhabitants, who wanted us to stay a day longer, and, being already late, we had difficulty finding someone to bring us petrol on board. So we finished working late at night, but at least I went to bed quietly, because by now the aircraft was ready to leave the next day.

Menado was very pretty from the top, but I could not tell my impression of the city, for we arrived at the hotel when it was already night, and we were so tired that after a bath and a short dinner, we went straight to sleep.

August 19: to Zamboanga

The following day, August 19, the Governor came to greet us on our departure. The crossing we had to make from Menado to Zamboanga, on the desert sea of Celebes, was perhaps one of the most risky of the whole journey. It was 800 kilometres of completely open sea, on which no steamer route passed and on which no sail could be hoped to be found. Perhaps for tens of years no one had crossed that sea! The weather was fortunately magnificent at Menado, but I could not know what it was like at Zamboanga, because, although there was a telegraph, no direct communication was

possible; in fact, the telegram announcing my departure from Menado arrived, as I afterwards learned, at Zamboanga with a delay of about four days.

The atmosphere was warm and heavy, and this was very annoying to me for the take-off. In fact, at 8.50 am a first attempt failed. We waited for the radiator to cool down, and in the meantime I thought of lightening the aircraft so as not to waste any more time in useless attempts.

“Ernesto,” I said, “here we must resign ourselves to throwing something into the sea, otherwise we will not take off again. Let us see what we can give up.

The AM spare pumps: To the sea. The gears of the axles in cases:-To the sea. The series of main bearings: To the sea. We also emptied 60 litres of gasoline.

After what had happened to me on arrival at Menado, I wanted to be cautious in lightening myself of gasoline. But a second attempt did not even succeed. I decided to get rid of part of the food.

We spread our reserves on deck, and about ten kilograms of the provisions we had bought at Townsville went to the benefit of the fish. I parted with them reluctantly, for our existence was at stake if any accident should have befallen us on that lonely sea over which we were preparing to fly.

But more important than the lightening was a slight breeze that had risen in the meantime and at 10.25, as soon as the engine was cold enough for a new attempt, I started up again. To increase the pitching of the aircraft in order to facilitate its handling on the step. I placed Edouardo on the bow to act as a counterweight with alternating movements of the body, and finally succeeded in my intention. It took a two-kilometre run before I was in the air. I took a tour of the city and made the usual passage on an alignment to correct the compass. I found here that the charts did not correspond exactly to nature, and then I took an average course corresponding to the true course 332°.

I put the engine at 1600 rpm and started flying at an altitude of 500 meters. It was clear: scattered clouds here and there and light wind from the South-South-West. The sea was completely deserted and in the whole 800-kilometre journey we never saw a sail or a boat of any kind. At 12.40, the breeze having increased and having turned south-west, I corrected the course of 5° to the left; later, about 1 pm, having turned the wind still further to the west, I ran another 10° to the left. Around 1 pm, clouds began to come towards me, which forced me to climb in altitude. Finally, at about 2 pm, as soon as I passed over a bank of clouds higher than the others, I had the welcome spectacle of the earth below.

It was the island of Basilan, which was located in front of Zamboanga. I congratulated myself on the correct navigation, because I found myself perfectly on course after about an hour I was on Zamboanga. A boat was ready at our disposal at a buoy prepared especially for us.

At sea it was also a raft with a large white canvas “T” to show the direction of the wind, which is also superfluous because at sea the direction of the wind can always be well appreciated from the direction of the waves. At any rate, what I saw from above delighted me very much, for it was a symptom that there was someone taking care of us: and in fact, as soon as we landed, the boat came near us, and with the help of it we moored at the stern to a tugboat, on which the gasoline and oil were already ready.

Major Fletcher of the American Army had been charged with all that pertained to our landing , and I am very grateful to this officer for the great care, indeed for the great enthusiasm he put into carrying out the task entrusted to him.

We were finally in the Philippines.

Zamboanga, Philippines, 19 August 1924: Smithsonian collection

*Philippines: land of typhoons

I was very happy to have finally arrived in the Philippines, because from here on, although I still had difficult stages to complete, I would find myself in more civilised countries, where I could possibly have had support.

But, the Philippines was destined to mark the beginning of endless tribulations for me, due to the bad season in which I had arrived.

In Zamboanga we were hosted in the house already inhabited for five years by General Pershing, when he was governor of the island.

This house was by the sea, very strange, all wooden, without walls. The rooms were divided by curtains and the external walls were made up of sliding screens. These were formed of a minutely latticed frame with shell scales used as glass, which allowed a diaphanous and white light to filter through.

My bed was on a veranda, in the open air, and from it I could watch over my aircraft over the water. This was convenient for me, for there was no harbour or shelter from the sea in Zamboanga, and one had to be ready to rush if the weather conditions became bad.

That evening we attended a ball, offered by the Governor, a young and beardless Filipino. I met many local ladies, dressed in the special fashion of the islands, reminiscent of medieval Spanish costumes.

I soon began to experience the delights of typhoons, for shortly after my arrival I was informed that the second signal had been hoisted on the mast of the harbour master's office.

The second signal means that a typhoon has formed in the Pacific and is about to pass north of the Philippines.

During the night the wind and sea arose, and I slept with one eye, peeking now and then at the aircraft on which I had placed a light.

The following day, August 20, the weather continued badly. I received news that the typhoon passed that day north of Manila. I brought my suitcases on board and waited for further information about the weather. These came much later and were not very reassuring. The weather in Zamboanga had also deteriorated considerably, and so I was obliged to postpone my departure until the next day. I took advantage of the stop to visit the city, which is very pretty, full of gardens and tropical plants. I remember a beautiful avenue all of palm trees and a riviera full of marsh plants.

I also went to visit a normal school, whose admirable order and development I admired. The teachers of it told me that in the Philippines they took great care of elementary education and that they had obtained an average attendance at school equivalent to that of the most advanced countries in the world.

In the afternoon very violent gusts suddenly arrived from the South-West, accompanied by downpours: it was a real storm. Thank goodness I had managed to leave Menado the day before!

The aircraft danced a lot, but it held up well. Fortunately in the evening the wind fell almost completely.

The news from Manila was always bad.

On August 21 I embarked early, but because of the sea the take-off failed, and I therefore had to be towed, close to the Islet of Santa Cruz, which was four kilometres south of Zamboanga, by a motorboat in which Major Fletcher had come to help me. There was a strong current of about 7 kilometres. The tides were getting bigger and bigger, and this caused, repeatedly, during the journey, the breakage of the tow cable, putting us more than once at the mercy of the waves. When the cable broke, the manoeuvre to re-tie it on our bow was very long, complicated and difficult. After about an hour and a half of navigation I arrived close to the islet of Santa Cruz, where I made a second take-off attempt that did not even succeed, to my great surprise, because the fuel load was already very limited and it was not possible to reduce it further.

In the meantime a motorboat arrived from Zamboanga, which delivered to me two bags of mail to be taken to Cebu in Manila; so I also did a little of the job of postman, but I did it willingly, happy to be able to reciprocate in some way the many courtesies that were used to me by the local authorities[16].

This philatelic item is on the market for $300 USD. See page 217 for more 'de Pinedo' philatelic examples

[16] See page 214 for more philatelic examples

At 9.30 I tried the take-off again. This time I moved further off the island of Santa Cruz in order to run in the first stretch in calm sea, and, subsequently, enter the unsheltered water area, to be facilitated by the waves when launching myself into the air.

The manoeuvre was extremely difficult and the most exciting of my entire trip. Very strong changes in the waves made me seriously fear that the hull of the aircraft would break. If the aircraft had fallen back into the water at an angle, it would certainly broken a wing. Any other aircraft, which had not had the extraordinary strength of the hull of the S. 16 ter, would have been definitely been lost. But our wonderful boat did not suffer the slightest damage or displacement. As God willed, I found myself in the air.

It was 9.35. I certainly headed for the Gulf of Sibuguey instead of along the west coast of Mindanao, because in this way I could take advantage of the land sheltered from the SW wind, even though I was obliged, by such a route, to cross a mountainous area of about thirty kilometres.

At 11:30 am, a thick curtain of rain appeared in front of me. It was a hurricane that walked from South to North. I passed under it, but very violent blows on the aircraft. Beyond the hurricane the air was always very rough and the sea rough. Shortly afterwards Ernesto noticed that the horn of the air intake of the right carburettor had been damaged and a piece of copper was about to blow away with serious danger to the propeller, in whose blades it could have ended up. It would have been advisable to alight to eliminate the inconvenience, but the sea was rough and on the coast of the island of Cebu, where I was, there was no inlet suitably sheltered.

Ernesto then stood up under the engine to grab the horn and prevent it from being lost.

I tried to reduce my speed to reduce the battering he was suffering. made, exposed as he was completely to the open air. We were about half an hour from Cebu. Every now and then I turned to see if Ernesto was coping. Under the violence of the wind I could see all the skin of his face wrinkled, pulled to one side, and his eyes tearing from the slap of the air. To top it all off, violent gusts produced strong jolts to the aircraft.

I arrived in these conditions above Cebu, but the port offered no other shelter from the sea than in a slight bend of the coast, crowded with fishing boats. I could not alight in water that was not calm, because a slightly stronger shock would have made Ernesto fall into the water and into the propeller.

I therefore approached downwind, with a few revolutions of the engine, to the area where the boats were and slipping between some of them I slipped slightly on the water, with little speed, without the slightest jolt.

Ernesto couldn't take it anymore. As soon as the engine stopped and the anchor was dropped, we verified that the horn was almost completely detached from the carburettor. We also realised, with alarm, that the cover cap of the petrol pipe, probably detached during the arduous take-off manoeuvre of the morning, had hit the propeller chipping a blade.

Meanwhile the harbour captain came to warn me that, where we had anchored, after an hour there would be no more water because of the tide. The news did not cheer us up; and in tow of a small motorboat we went to a place where, according to us, there was more water.

This towing was not very easy for the numerous fishing boats that cluttered the port; and it took a long time, so that before we were ready, the hurricane under which we had flown that morning broke out on us, . A first result of the strong gusts was the breaking of the anchor cable.

The aircraft thus drifted in the wind and sea and ended up on the poles of an oyster farm, making some holes in the canvas of the wings. At this critical moment, the motorboat had an engine failure. Then came a rowing boat, where good rowers were, and with this I was able to remove the aircraft from the poles of the oyster house and put it in tow of a large steamboat, where some authorities were assembled to welcome us. So we set off in the rain and between twisted and angry waves towards a basin where we could have found a quiet shelter. But the wind and rain increased more and more, and shortly afterwards the tow line broke again.

The aircraft hit under the sides of a steamer at anchor. I though it was almost lost, because the tail had received two or three violent blows from the ship.

Fortunately, the rudders were stuck in the centre and there were no major failures, as certainly would have happened if the rudders had been even slightly on one side. When I managed to take the boat in tow again, a Filipino, in order to give the mooring line more quickly, jumped on the wings, believing that they were made of iron. A cry so loud and so convincing, that the poor devil, who, as soon as he arrived on the wing, had practically realised that it was instead of canvas, found no other solution than to throw himself into the sea. As God willed, I managed to get to the small dock, where it was calm. I moored it near land; but as soon as this third manoeuvre was finished, they told me that the place was not very suitable because there were many stones which, due to the low tide, could have damaged the hull. I then changed moorings for a fourth time.

I found an Italian on the spot, the only Italian in all of Cebù. He had been there for three years, and, obliged to speak the Spanish language always, he now found it difficult to express himself in his native language.

We were very happy when we were finally able to go to the hotel and take off our wet clothes.

August 22: at Cebu

On the 22nd of August, with the help of some fishermen, I was able to recover the anchor, which had been lying at the bottom in the stormy morning of the previous day. The wings were patched and the propeller adjusted as best as possible. The steering wheel had suffered some damage to the hinges, but they were soon put back in order.

Refuelling was then made to be ready to leave the following day. In the afternoon, when the work was finished, we took a trip by car with the Governor, to a nearby village, along roads that crossed woods of magnificent lush tropical vegetation.

I received several telegrams from Manila, where it seemed that they were anxiously awaiting us, and not least because my arrival was delayed from day to day: on the other hand, it was not my fault, but the inclemency of the elements.

August 23: towards Manila: Saian

On Sunday 23rd, at 7 am, we were on board. We received another bag of mail for Manila: at 7.42 I took off quite easily, due to the cool breeze from the bow. However, after the experience of the difficult and stunted take-off of Zamboanga, this time I had loaded on the aircraft the fuel only necessary to reach Manila, taking into account a moderate headwind. But this was the cause of other troubles.

At 7.45 I was in the air. As soon as I was in the air I realised that the weather was not favourable. For the first half hour I was met by the most violent whirlwinds. After that, the wind turned to the west, and this greatly delayed our progress: I saw from some observations that we were not doing more than 100 kilometres per hour. In some areas the speed was even lower, and I calculated that the strength of the wind varied between sixty and eighty kilometres per hour. A typhoon raged north-east of Manila.

In addition to the very strong wind, we met with many showers here and there and everywhere, large masses of clouds. I soon realised that, with the available gasoline, I could not reach Manila. My route was traced along the island of Luzon to the west. I calculated that the petrol would be enough for me to get about a hundred kilometres from the destination, and since there were no shelters on the west coast of Luzon, I would have been obliged to go down to sea, causing the certain loss of the aircraft.

The sea below us was white with foam, and I learned afterwards that the steamers that had left that day had not been able to continue and had gone close to await the passage of the storm.

While I was looking for a suitable place to alight on the Lamon Bay, I saw a steamer near the coast surrounded by some boats.

“If there is a steamer there, there must be a good reason!” I thought.

We landed near the beach. It was noon. A few barracks, a landing pier and a canopy for the railway: this was the whole village.

I checked the petrol in the tank: there was only 75 litres left, not enough for the distance that still remained to be covered.

From the land many watched us curiously, but no boat came to help us, although I called insistently. After a while a good devil arrived in a small canoe, one of those built by digging a tree trunk with fire, and whose balance is ensured by two large bamboos parallel to the keel, held by small antennas overboard at the water's edge. This primitive boat had very little stability, as I had observed. In fact, I jumped as best I could on it, but,

as soon as I had taken two strokes with the oar, the boat sank, and the boatman and I found ourselves in the water. I swam back on board.

“Now we are even,” I said to Ernesto, remembering the bath he had taken at Batavia.

I squeezed my clothes as best I could and with pins I put some bank notes I had in my pocket to dry on the wings. Then, jumping on another boat a little larger that had come to help, I landed on land.

Once the refuelling was completed, we went to the station master who offered us a small meal. Such was the heat and humidity, that having wet clothes on or not made little difference. During breakfast I dried my jacket in the kitchen by the fire.

The captain of the steamer, who was also a guest, kindly wanted to radiotelegraph our news to Tilla.

At 3.30 pm, the weather seemed to me to be slightly cleared, so I took off again; but when I left the coast and went into Luzon, I found a very strong wind from the west, which slowed down the march very much. I climbed up to get over the thick clouds that covered the earth. With the gasoline bought from Siain, the engine warmed up more than it should. The curtain of clouds became more and more impenetrable. Given the mountains below, it was not convenient for me to get into the clouds, and at 4.15 pm I gave up the attempt; and having regained the coast very quickly by the west wind, I landed at Mauban, a small inlet that promised a good shelter. We were immediately surrounded by a number of pirogues full of onlookers. Few huts were to be seen on the beach. I asked one of the natives, who spoke a little Spanish, if there was a telegraph or a railway, but Mauban was really a lost country, for not only was there no telegraph or railway, but not even any road of communication with the interior.

Spending the night in one of those huts did not please me; so, before it got dark, I wanted to leave that place.

I started the engine again. While I was floating, I bumped into something that was at the bottom, I didn't quite understand whether it was a large abandoned anchor or a rock. I took off anyway, and at 5.25 pm I landed near another small town further south, Atimonan, among very violent whirlwinds. I was about to touch water, when I suddenly found myself in front of some poles of an oyster farm, which in the dark could not be seen from a distance, and I barely had time to avoid them.

in the rain, in the small dock, where it was calm. I moored near land; but as soon as this third manoeuvre was finished, they told me that the place was not very suitable because there were many stones which, due to the low tide, could have damaged the hull. I then changed moorings for a fourth time.

We then inspected the aircraft: all the faults were fortunately repairable. It had been three and a half hours of manoeuvring in the rain, but worse than the rain, an inevitable evil, I suffered from the assault of some “reporters” who, in those very moments, in

which I was afraid of losing my composure at any moment, bombarded me with questions on the most useless topics.

To save the situation, there was nothing to do but to go to the east coast of Luzon, sheltered from the sea and the wind, and to alight, approaching as far north as possible, in the first inlet where there was some village that happened to have road or rail communications with Manila. In this way I could have received, in a short time, the necessary fuel to finish this unfortunate stage.

I sighted in the clouds the Island of Sibuyan, an immense cone that rises from the sea up to 2500 meters high, and I remember that in its vicinity I had a very tiring job to remain master of the aircraft among the strong contrasts of the wind.

At 10.55 am I was crossing Punta Arena on the island of Luzon and I could consider myself safe, because the route was now continuing along a sheltered coast.

I went through two or three heavy rains, but by now I had the calm sea below me; I therefore felt safe and calm. At 12 o'clock I came out into Lamon Bay. There were about 154 kilometres to Manila. Huge heaps of clouds, from which a thick curtain of rain descended on the sea, would have prevented me, even with sufficient fuel, from continuing, given also the mountainous and precipitous nature of the terrain that I would have had to fly over to pass from the east coast to the west coast of Luzon, where the bay of Manila was located.

I squeezed my clothes as best I could and with pins I put some bank notes I had in my pocket to dry on the wings. Then, jumping on another boat a little larger that had come to help, I landed on land.

The village was called Siain and the railway reached Manila.

On the spot there was a small petrol depot for cars; I bought 150 litres, which we put in our tank.

In tropical countries, twilight is very short. When I dropped anchor it was already night. The rain and darkness had delivered everyone to the houses. As much as we screamed for help, not a soul moved on the ground. It took a good half hour before a boat approached us, with which we went to the beach.

Given the bad weather conditions, I was very worried about losing the aircraft which, if the wind had been blown from the open sea, could have shattered against the beach. I therefore asked for a rope and an anchor to reinforce the moorings. But they all turned a deaf ear. I then asked that they take me to the mayor, and, after a long walk through the city, we came to a pharmacist who was the mayor. I made myself known, and after many difficulties I was finally able to get a rope, provided by the local fire station.

There were no anchors available. I then asked permission to use in their place an old colubrina[17] that was in the central square, but I obtained nothing but a success of hilarity; I offered to buy the colubrina; identical success.

I went on board again, and, after a long and laborious manoeuvre, was able to reinforce the mooring of the aircraft, which remained in the power of its anchor and rope, which was tied to a mast near the ground.

It was 11 am in the morning. The pharmacist mayor then hosted us in his house, offered us a small dinner and so after twelve hours I was finally able to go to sleep and take off the clothes with which I had taken the unexpected bath in the morning. Our accommodation in the mayor's house had not even been an easy thing, because at the beginning he had indicated to us a self-styled hotel which, as soon as we had visited, I had certainly discarded. Only when, since there was nothing better, I asked to be able to sleep on the pillows of the two cars that existed in the village, the Mayor had decided to host us in his fairly comfortable house, if we consider the limited resources of the town.

The next morning an unhappy surprise awaited me: due to the unsuitable gasoline and the high temperature, to which the engine had been exposed in the long fleets of the previous day, the central row of cylinders had deformed valves and burnt water pipe gaskets. It took about a day's work to put the engine in a condition to be able to reach Manila, where new spare parts were available. I telegraphed there, warning of the delay and requesting aviation gasoline and everything necessary for the mooring of the aircraft. In the afternoon the weather conditions worsened again. From Manila I was told of threatening weather and another typhoon on its way from the Pacific towards Luzon. It was urgent to secure the aircraft.

North of Atimonan there flowed into the sea a small river of the estuary quite wide. With the help of some native fishermen, I brought the aircraft there.

In the evening, the Italian Consul in Manila and Major Browne, commander of the American air forces detached to the Philippines, as well as the representative of Shell, arrived in Atimonan with two cars.

It didn't seem real to me, after so many situations, to see friendly people willing to help me!

They brought me everything I had asked for.

Our host, proud to have so many illustrious guests, organised a succulent banquet and found a way, I don't know how, to put the new ones to sleep in his house as well

August 24: still not at Manila

Arrived.

The next 11 day, August 26, the aircraft was ready to start with the new gasoline, but the weather had worsened even more, as the typhoon was in its full development. It rained

[17] This word did not translate.

heavily all day and night. The relief expedition returned to Manila. While waiting I took a car ride to Lucena, on the other side of the mountain, to see for myself the configuration of the mountains on which I would have to pass. We ran perhaps more dangers in the automobile than we had until

Then I ran to the machine, for the road was very steep and steep, and full of steep turns over deep abysses. The car also did not have excessively safe brakes.

On the other side of the mountains I found the weather equally bad: the clouds reached the ground. In those conditions, taking into account the precarious state of my engine, it was not convenient to attempt the crossing.

That evening another expedition of journalists arrived from Manila . They too were hosted by the Mayor of Atimonan, whose house became so famous throughout the Philippines. But If this state of affairs had continued, I think we would have ended up wrecking it.

August 27– Manila at last

On the 27th, at 7 am, the weather being slightly clear, I left.

I found it still raining and overcast, but fortunately the clouds were very low and allowed me to pass. At 8.40 am I arrived in Manila in the interior of the port, under a heavy downpour, which continued throughout the mooring manoeuvre, which was very tiring.

The next day I flew the plane to Corregidor Island, where I obtained permission to shelter it. I was escorted by three seaplanes of the American Air Force, and even during this short twenty-minute voyage we had water and bad weather.

Putting the aircraft in the hangar, I made arrangements with the commander of the seaplane base for the work, and Ernesto began the dismantling of the engine without delay. Meanwhile, under the hull on the right there was a small leak from which some water seeped in, right at the point where the aircraft had touched Mauban on the hard. I also decided, taking advantage of the time needed for the overhaul of the engine, to give the aircraft a part of those checks and those works that I planned to have carried out in Tokyo.

The engine overhaul was absolutely necessary. Apart from the inconveniences which have occurred recently, if we consider that the engine had to its credit since its start-up 220 hours of operation, of which 60 hours since the overhaul at Melbourne, it must be admitted that we had asked far too much of it and that no engine has ever been found to work for so long and under such difficult circumstances.

In recent times, the conditions had worsened due to the long fleets on the occasion of various difficult take-offs which had the effect, due to the high temperature developed, of deforming the valve seats, making compression deficient. Add to this the fact that, owing to the time lost in Sydney, I was now in the middle of typhoon season, and, after the experience I had gained, it was not convenient for me to go on without the engine first being in perfect order.

While Ernesto remained in Corregidor to carry out the work on the aircraft, I installed myself in Manila, occasionally going to the island in flight on one of the American seaplanes.

In Manila, as in all the other cities of the Philippines, we were welcomed very warmly and cordially. It was the first time that an aircraft had flown from abroad to the Philippines.

The Americans, with sympathetic sporting friendship, were generous with help and courtesies towards me, and the Filipinos also tried to show me their sympathy in every way. My situation was a bit delicate, given the political issues pending in that world between Americans and Filipinos, so much so that journalists, interviewing me, tried to make me slip into the slippery political terrain, where I was careful not to fall. To escape the demanding demands of reporters, I had to cut the telephone wires in my hotel room. Not knowing what else to say about me, they gave vent to talking about the cut of my clothes, the colour of my hair, and other things that I don't know how much the public was interested in.

In Manila a committee had been created for the celebrations on the occasion of our arrival, a committee chaired by the Don Miguel Romualdez. To await my arrival, many people had been stationed on the 11th quay of the port for whole days, and small camps with kitchen service had been organized. A squadron of aeroplanes, the day I had left Cebu, had taken off to greet me. Unfortunately, one of the aircraft, due to an engine failure, had alighted into the water and was lost. The airmen got away with a bath. I then met them and to console them I told them that on the same day I too, and for another reason, had taken a nice dip in the water with all my flying clothes.

Five days of official ceremonies were established, which later became seven, and from 9 am, sometimes earlier, I was no longer master of myself until midnight. I was not allowed to go to the hotel except when strictly necessary to change clothes.

Sometimes I was more tired in the evening than at the end of one of those days of struggle with the adverse elements of nature.

General Wood, Governor of the Philippine Islands, treated me with great benevolence and cordiality and manifested in various ways his interest in my journey and his sincere desire to know that my flight was crowned with complete success. Even General MacRae, Commander of the Occupying Forces, and the Admiral Commander of the naval units, were very generous with hospitality and help. Don Miguel Romualdez, the nice chief magistrate of Manila, and the Italian Consul Dr. Ghezzi were true friends for me.

I will therefore not even mention the series of banquets and visits with which this chorus of sympathies had its tangible form.

At the end of the seven days of official banquets, the series of private invitations began and... I think there are still some who are dissatisfied.

The American airmen were good comrades with me. Rarely have I met such a company of good guys with an open heart, so close-knit and jovial. Invited to visit the land airfield near Manila (Nichols field), I found all the aircraft lined up there, reviewed them, and witnessed a flight, on one of them. I greatly admired the style of the evolutions and the style of the pilots, all excellent, without exception.

A parachute was mandatory on board, and the regulatory type in use was very simple and practical. It had no metal parts, and it was all contained in an envelope of canvas placed on the seat as a cushion. The straps with which it was fixed to the body did not bother at all. They showed me a statistic, which showed that hundreds of lives had been saved after the regulatory adoption of the parachute. In the event of a forced landing of dubious success, such as in fog or in the mountains, it was prescribed to abandon the aircraft and descend by parachute.

In this way, a remarkable economy of lives was achieved which, apart from the humanitarian issue, was also important from a financial point of view.

The aviators were almost all married, and their pretty wives were permitted, not to say obliged, to make a flight from time to time in the military aircraft, which had no inconsiderable influence on morale.

I have reported of this environment, both from the material and moral point of view, the most pleasant and favourable impression.

On the other hand, the Filipinos wished to give me a sign of their sympathy by welcoming me to the Senate and in a special session to the Chamber of Deputies, where various speakers pronounced speeches of admiration for our country, to which the Filipinos look as a model of civilisation and example in all fields of human activity.

The Filipinos, who to the number of 11 million populate these islands favoured by nature, are of a race originating from the Malay stock much blended and crossed with the Spaniards, who for about 300 years have dominated the islands, leaving a definitive imprint of their passage in the local customs and even in the language, Spanish being the national language.

They are the lively and intelligent Filipinos, lovers of art and progress and eager to develop their culture and their well-being more and more, as I was able to see when I visited the University of Manila and the numerous institutes of education, which arise in all the most important centres, informed by the healthiest scientific and modern concepts.

The islands are home to strong Chinese colonies, which have the most important trade in their power. There are still in the interior the remains of tribes of aborigines, such as Mangiani, Morose Negritos, in a completely wild state, still living in caves. The major nuclei of these tribes are found in lands that are little explored or inaccessible to the ordinary means of communication.

I was able to realise during my short stay what immense advantages the country could benefit from a well-organized network of air communications. Especially in the less accessible parts of the islands, civilisation is proceeding slowly because of the enormous expenditure and time involved in the construction of a road communications ``network. By air and especially by seaplanes (sheltered bays and rich waterways abound everywhere) it is possible, in the space of a few months and with very limited expense, to organize the rapid connection of unexplored regions with the most important and civilised centres.

It is easy to infer what enormous advantages this could bring to the exploitation of the country's resources, and I believe that the wealth of these islands, privileged by nature, could in a short time be doubled, and its civil progress accelerated.

The forests that cover the ground everywhere are magnificent, rich in precious plants: there are more than 5000 species! Coconut abounds everywhere, from which the copra is obtained, of which a great export is made to America.

The season I had been in the Philippines was the worst of the year. The three weeks that I was stationary in Manila, waiting for the engine to be overhauled, it rained continuously, and two days before I left that place there were 93 millimetres of rain in the 24 hours. The climate was therefore very humid and I often found my clothes covered with mould overnight.

Typhoons were added to the rains, as that was the period of their maximum frequency. In a week there were three, which passed just north of the island of Luzon, in the Balintang Channel, which is between Formosa and Luzon, and which is considered by sailors to be one of the worst areas in the world, from a meteorological point of view. The delay to which I was forced led me to find myself in worse and worse weather conditions.

In the meantime, I had contacted the meteorological office in Manila, which had been established for about 30 years and collected the weather reports of Formosa, the island of Guam, Japan and China, giving sailors the weather forecast every day. There was also an astronomical observatory and a seismic observatory.

The Fathers in charge of the office told me that fortunately there are rarely typhoons such as to flatten entire villages to the ground. In Manila he remembered one who had cut down some centuries-old trees like twigs on the esplanade of the port, and the instruments, after recording a wind of the speed of 200 kilometres per hour, had broken.

These typhoons form most frequently in August and September east of the Philippine Islands, near Guam. The centre of the meteor then slowly shifts westward, generally passing through the Balintang Channel, between the Philippines and Formosa. Some arrive on the coast of China, where they get lost. Others bend to the North, and then to the East, passing over the islands of the Japanese Archipelago.

During my stay in Manila there were reports of seven typhoons, one of which, continuing its journey on the Japanese coast, destroyed a fishing village, causing several victims. Since my course was running northwards, I was able to avoid the typhoons forming over the Pacific, having a higher speed. If, however, any failure had forced me to alight and stop near the Balintang Channel, it was over, for I could not have avoided the approaching typhoon.

In the meantime I corresponded with the Italian authorities in Tokyo, to find out if the Japanese Government had decided which route I should follow through Formosa and for the arrival in Japan, according to the requests made through diplomatic channels for about three months.

Already in Australia I had received notice from the Japanese Government through diplomatic channels that the route through Formosa was absolutely inadvisable, and the route from Formosa to Kagoshima through the Riu-Kiu alone was forbidden for military reasons. I did not expect this prohibition that lengthened my path, because of the usual treaty agreements.

Manila from the air. 1925

The Japanese had undertaken not to fortify those islands, and I did not see why they had forbidden me to pass over them, when the British, without any exception of any kind and with great courtesy, had very promptly given me permission to fly over Singapore, which is also a military port of interest to them.

So I decided to follow the Shanghai-Kagoshima route from Formosa, with a possible stop in southern Korea, instead of the route along the Riu-Kiu Islands. Other difficulties, overcome only towards the end of my stay in Manila, were made to me for the landing in Formosa, and after long insistence through diplomatic channels, the landing of Tam-sui was exceptionally granted.

Moreover, I had planned to follow the West route of Formosa, because it was rich in waterways and ports where, in any eventuality, I could find shelter; instead I was forbidden this route and I was ordered to follow the east coast where the mountains descend steeply to the sea, without the slightest inlet or shelter or river estuary where I could possibly descend safely, if forced to; and which, especially in that season, was beaten in full by typhoons.

The west coast was inhabited, civilised, full of roads and means of communication, while the east coast was inhabited only by tribes of savages in continuous guerrilla warfare with the Japanese and deprived of any road or means of communication.

It was also prescribed that at Giran, towards the north of Formosa, I should leave the east coast which there begins to be inhabited and civilised, presenting several ports and shelters as far as Tam-Sui, and cross the whole of its width, about 80 kilometres, the island of Formosa, between chains of mountains from 2000 to 3000 meters high, out of sight of rivers or other waterways. Then, having reached the west coast, I had to follow it to Tam Sui right in the area where it no longer had any shelter or possible crash landing for seaplanes.

I had crossed it 1200 kilometres of land from Bombay to Cocanada and I had also flown more than once in Europe over the Alps with a seaplane; but, in the rainy season in which we were, such high mountain ranges were completely covered with clouds and therefore difficult to pass each other, not to mention that the route on land represented a deviation from the natural and direct route along the coast. Then there was the fact that with the same engine I had already covered more than 30,000 kilometres and that, finally, it was in the middle of the typhoon season.

I believe that even on purpose, there could have been a more difficult and riskier route over Formosa; and probably, as the Japanese did not like foreigners flying over Formosa, all this was done to discourage me from continuing.

I accepted without question, and now I make these considerations to point out that if all nations were to act with regard to air travel in the same way, the progress and future of transcontinental air communications would be greatly compromised.

Meanwhile bad weather and typhoons had ruined the roads and interrupted communications with the North for some time, so that my supplies at Aparri, the port of the northern end of Luzon, from which I had to take flight to Formosa, had not been able to be delivered.

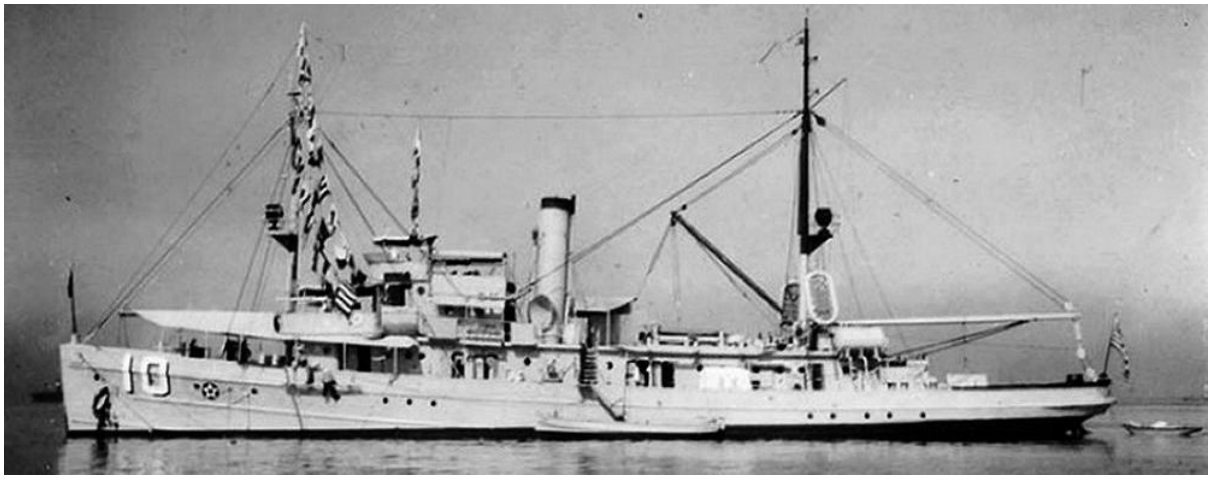
But the Admiral, who commanded the naval forces at Cavite, very kindly offered me to send to Aparri a small ship of the navy, the Heron, with the petrol and oil I needed. I accepted the generous offer with gratitude. It was decided that the Heron would leave a few days before the date of my departure.

September 12

On September 12, the Heron departed. On the same day, the work being finished, I went to Corregidor, tested the aircraft in flight and returned with it to Manila, mooring it in the interior of the port. In the meantime another typhoon had occurred, so that the Heron had been unable to continue and had gone to shelter in the port of Bolinao. From Aparri radiotelegraph they made that the weather was very bad. And so it was also on the 13th and 14th.

In the meantime I noticed that the aircraft was leaking as before: the repair had been unsuccessful. Every day about 300 litres had to be removed from the inside of the hull, which made the operations of our departure more complicated.

September 16



'Heron' was an 800-ton minesweeper that was also equipped as seaplane tender. USN photo, 1925

Finally, on the 16th, the weather seemed to me to have improved somewhat. The Heron had left Bolinao, where he had taken refuge, and continued northwards. Greeted by the Consul, at about 8:30 am we embarked and left. Three American aeroplanes escorted me for about an hour's drive, obeying a kind thought from the commander of the air force.

The weather, which was quite good in Manila, was bad during the route, getting worse and worse. Wind and gusts and rainfall. I followed the coast, but at the IO, the rain increased in intensity, I was forced to descend almost 100 meters above the water,

always following the coast, until at 10.45 I thought it prudent not to continue, due to the very poor visibility; I then alighted into the small cove of Bolinao, where the Heron had sheltered in the days before, and anchored near a village which I had recognized from above. By means of a small boat I went ashore to telegraphically inform of my stop and to ask for news of the weather.

The town was all flooded by the rain, so much so that to go to the telegraph office I had to ford several roads that had become torrents; I then found a native who rode me on his shoulders. But I could do nothing at the telegraph office, for the bad weather had broken all communications, and telegrams were being routed by a postman on horseback to a country about six miles away, and where the telegraph seemed to be still working.

At one o'clock I went back on board, all soaked, without having accomplished anything. I decided to continue. The starting manoeuvre was not easy, because a fuel inlet pipe had broken for starting, and it took some time to repair it. At half past one I was back in the air.

The weather had become clear to the north, and indeed, though I met with more rain showers on the way and a little fog, I had a fairly good journey for the remainder, and at 3.35 pm I alighted to Aparri, on the river, near the Heron, which had arrived the same morning.

Philatelic item, Manila to Apari. See also page 217

Having noticed during the journey that the propeller gave some slight vibrations, I wanted to disassemble it to adjust it again and balance it. But it was not possible, because, with the limited local resources, there were no means necessary to be able to perform the balancing, and therefore the propeller was reassembled in place as it was, again providing for a more accurate centring, which gave satisfactory results.

I did the complete refuelling, given the long stage to Tam-Sui in the north of the island of Formosa, and given the weather conditions that were expected to be bad.

Major Browne had also embarked on board the Heron. that he had kindly come to greet me as far as Aparri, and who thereby gave me a proof of his wonderful support; his

journey had indeed been very bad, and I think my excellent friend must not have enjoyed himself much with the sea.

We were now on the verge of facing one of the most risky stages. on the success of which depended that of the whole journey. From Aparri to Tam-Sui, for the route that the Japanese had assigned us, we travelled about 850 kilometres. Favourable winds could not be relied upon, since in September the predominant winds are from the North or North east. Any forced landing even along the coast of Formosa or near the Batan Islands, halfway between Formosa and Luzon, would have been fatal, because the conditions of the sea were always stormy, and the currents very violent, determined especially by the tides and the unevenness of the seabed.

These currents produce here and there vortices dangerous for small hulls. The Batan Islands are considered to be the place on earth where there is the greatest atmospheric rainfall: in them it rains almost continuously.

The east coast of Formosa, along which the route was carried out by order of the Japanese Government, was, as I have said, devoid of any shelter or shelter; the mountains descended steeply to the sea, without any inlet.

The prospect was very cheerful. Thank goodness that the engine, after the magnificent work done by Ernesto. it was very good, as perhaps he had never been since we left: and yes, he had also been well fed!

Before leaving, I received a telegram from the children of a school in Porto Basco, on the Batan Island. It said: “Lord, pass over us; we have never seen an aeroplane”.

Radiotelegraphy was, it can be said, almost the only means of communication that this island had with the rest of the world. From time to time steamers stop in Porto Basco but, in the season we were in, for about three months no steamer had arrived on the island, due to the bad weather conditions.

I felt that I was going to play a definitive card. The Commander of the Heron, by order of the Admiral, had kindly offered to wait for Aparri until I arrived at Formosa or to go to Porto Basco to await my passage. If I had accepted, the value of my journey and my thesis would have been diminished. So I thanked him and he, on the 17th, two days before I left Aparri, returned to Manila.

On the morning of the 18th I was ready, but I was unable to take off, despite having emptied the hull of the water that had penetrated it during the night. I was too excited. I drained 50 litres of gasoline and had lunch. After a second unsuccessful attempt I then postponed my departure until the next day; In the meantime some repairs were made to the oil tank, which had a slight leak, and I took on board a can of oil as a souvenir.

In the evening, as a farewell from the Philippine Islands, a hall was given in our honour by the small local society. On Saturday 19th, at 4 am, I was up, and at 6.15 am I managed to take off, taking advantage of a very light breeze.

From the Philippines to Japan

Departure, 19 September

The time was clear. A few clouds here and there and a light breeze from the South.

“The devil is not so ugly as he is portrayed,” I thought.

I headed north, passed to the right of Escape Island and to the left of Babuyan. At 8 o'clock I was over the island of Batan. The sea had strange upheavals here, which denoted strong contrasts of current similar to those seen passing the Strait of Messina. Here, however, much more accentuated phenomena were noticed from above and it seemed that the water was boiling as in a colossal pot.

Time had darkened. The wind had turned to the north. Purple clouds, heavy with water, thickened over the islands. The sea had an apparent tranquility as of an impious man meditating or resting on some misdeed.

I deviated from the course passing in sight of Basque Port on the island of Batan, to satisfy the desire of those boys who had telegraphed me. The radiotelegraph antennas of Porto Basco were lapped by clouds and the whole island had the sad and distant appearance of a lost land confined far from civil society, under the perennial threat of typhoons and under the persistent monotony of constant rains, without breathing, without rest.

I don't know why, but the whole panorama had a gloomy aspect, as if the air were pervaded by the souls of the castaways swallowed up there by the waves.

The clouds were gathering huge on the left of the route; I leaned slightly to the right, where they were higher and the rain less thick.

To Tam Sui

at 8:20 am, I left the Batan Islands.

Around 9 o'clock I caught a glimpse for a moment of the outline of the island of Tobago, soon hidden by grey clouds. But that brief interruption was enough for me to realise the position and the path.

The most impervious and desolate area was now over.

The weather, as I approached Formosa, became drier and calmer. I caught a glimpse of a few sailing ships and a steamer. The coast appeared barren and deserted, descending steeply on the water; here and there you could see valleys as deep as ravines; immense cracks in the rocks marked the path of some stream.

At 10.30 I was near Karenho, a small roadstead where I had sent some petrol to refuel in case the wind from the north had reduced my speed too much; but the path so far had been easy enough, and I went on.

At 11 am I was at Giran where, according to the instructions received from the Japanese Government, I would have to leave the coast to cross the island of Formosa from east to west, because the part of the island north of the parallel of Giran was a forbidden zone.

Thick layers of clouds covered the mountains; I could not foresee what the weather conditions would be on the other side of the island, nor was it necessary to think about making altitude to pass over the clouds because they reached, as far as I could judge, up to over 5000 meters and it was not the case to force the engine excessively.

I continued along the coast, passing off the territorial waters, as is permitted by international conventions, in order to be in good standing with the Japanese.

At about 12 noon I landed in Tam-Sui.

Here they had made great preparations for my arrival, and had even demarcated an area of water, where I was to land, by means of four anchored sampans, each of which had a large signal flag on its mast. I took a tour of the city and saw a great crowd waiting for me on the shore, near which I landed and stopped the engine, waiting. Shortly after, several motorboats arrived, in which the Japanese authorities were and welcomed me. With the usual help of motorboats, I moored the aircraft to a buoy.

Even in Tam-Sui they had never seen a seaplane. The schools had been closed on that day and all the pupils with their teachers were on the platform, where lined up by class they enjoyed the show. Each of them had an Italian or Japanese flag in their hands. They welcomed me with shouts of “banzai” and with great applause. The students of the normal schools sang Garibaldi's anthem, which they had learned by heart for the occasion, as if it were our national anthem.

The mayor of Tam Sui, an old-fashioned Japanese, in a tuba, frock coat and pearl grey gloves, read me an address in Japanese, to which I replied in Italian. Neither of us understood anything, but we appreciated each other's intentions. Finished the speeches. when he had finished drinking the champagne, the “banzai” finished and the effusions finished, the Governor's representative called me aside to tell me that he was extremely sorry to have to inform me that, since I had passed north of the forbidden zone, he was obliged to telegraph to Tokyo to ask for orders; and that in the meantime it was necessary, according to what had already been communicated through diplomatic channels, a visit to the luggage. I replied that I had passed to the north of the forbidden zone instead of to the south because I was forced to do so by the conditions of the weather, and that, on the other hand, having passed outside territorial waters, I had exercised my full right; but that in any case I would also have telegraphed to the Italian Ambassador in Tokyo regarding the incident. The conversation, however, took place with the utmost courtesy.

The commission of officers, therefore, began to examine the luggage minutely to see if I had any film or photographic equipment, but I, in anticipation of this and according to the instructions received earlier from Tokyo, had sent my photographic equipment from Manila directly to Shanghai, as I had declared. What still seems strange to me is that they did not check the seaplane.

In the meantime, the aircraft was being prepared for the next crossing to Shanghai. It was a crossing of about 700 kilometres. Petrol and oil were refuelled. In the engine

check it was found that the support of the left carburettor had broken and a pin had ended up in the propeller chipping a blade. The propeller had to be dismantled and a temporary repair had to be carried out. The support of the carburettor was made of aluminium and it was therefore not easy to weld. An officer had been sent by the Ministry of the Navy, at my disposal, and he helped me a lot.

That evening I went to Taihoku, the capital of Formosa, where I was offered a banquet of 150 seats by the community. Except for one or two people, no one spoke English, and therefore during the whole dinner it was a silent scene. After lunch, a film was shown that represented my arrival and which, having been "shot" on the morning of that same day, was a real speed record.

Taiwan (Formosa) was under Japanese control and this was an administrative building in Taihoku (Taipei), built in 1925.

The next day, Sunday, despite the holiday schedule, the director of the railway workshops very politely brought some workers from Taihoku to do the aluminium welding necessary to put the broken carburettor support back in order. The propeller was also repaired and put back in place.

In the meantime, I was waiting for instructions from the Ambassador and the Japanese authorities were also waiting for instructions from Tokyo.

On Sunday afternoon, accompanied by the agent of foreign affairs who had the functions of Governor at Tam-Sui, I made a trip into the interior, going to some springs of sulphurous water, where there were beautiful baths.

During my whole stay at Tam-Sui I was the guest of the English Consul, who had a superb residence and who looked after us with great cordiality, putting himself at our complete disposal.

I had decided to leave the following day, Monday, September 21st, but until Sunday evening, no instructions had yet arrived from Tokyo. On the other hand, I could not admit that I was stopped by the Japanese authorities, having respected in my route the international conventions, which give the right to ships to enter even fortified or forbidden ports if they are forced to do so by adverse weather conditions. I could not use this loophole because the weather was not a problem at that time.

The location was quite awkward for both me and the local authorities, who were very sorry for what had happened, they were in truth of the greatest courtesy and desirous of finding a solution that would allow me to leave without further delay. To show me their loyalty, they even worked with me on Sundays and during hours of rest, so that I would not suffer a greater delay in departure.

On Sunday evening, just before midnight, the frigate captain, who commanded the naval forces at Formosa, and the commander of the land forces, arrived at the house of the English consul. I immediately perceived from their smiling appearance that the incident had been resolved, and in fact they informed me that the Tokyo Government no longer had any difficulty with regard to my departure and that the incident would be settled on my arrival in the capital.

The newspapers meanwhile had covered the alfar and printed that I had passed over the forbidden zone, with huge headlines and characters.

I learned that some Russian aviators had arrived in Japan a few days earlier, flying across all of Siberia, and that they had had the misfortune to alight, due to an engine failure, into the interior of a fortified area. The airmen were therefore prevented from continuing their flight, and the aircraft were completely dismantled and sent by train to Tokyo.

October 21: To Shanghai

On the morning of the 21st I left for Shanghai.

All the authorities and school children came to greet me. The commander of the naval forces asked me if I would cut the Formosa Canal at the point where it was narrowest; I replied that I was heading directly to Shanghai. He had the extreme goodness to have a destroyer ready on his own initiative, in case he had the misfortune to alight into the open sea.

The take-off presented some difficulties because the wind was across the river, and therefore I did not have much space to run, especially since the body of water, from which I was to start, was narrower than usual, due to the low tide. In fact, a first attempt failed precisely because of lack of space. The second succeeded, because it was facilitated by the wind that had increased in the meantime. I had to make a conversion to the left, however, on the step, flying with the crosswind.

The sky was serene; a slight wind was blowing from the NE, which slowed down my speed a little. I headed north, heading for Shanghai, and kept flying at an altitude of about 500 m.

After an hour I sighted a steamer heading west: it was the Japanese steamer Tango Maru, around which I took a tour, while the crew waved their arms to greet me. After so many solitary navigations, I felt a sincere joy in seeing someone at sea.

At noon I reached the Chinese coast. The wind had weakened considerably; The temperature, rather low, allowed me to fly over 500 meters, keeping the radiator cool enough.

The Chinese land, as it appeared from above, gave an idea of the immensity of the population of this enormous region. On the sea there were thousands and thousands of junks and on land, except on the steepest hills or mountains, there was not a country tract longer than 100 meters where there was not a house. At about 2 pm I passed above Ning-Po.

As I approached Shanghai, the weather became beautiful. I passed at low altitude over the war units of the various nations, which were gathered at the mouth of the Whangpoo River. I made a circuit over the cruisers of our Navy, San Giorgio and Libia, which had all the crew lined up on deck. They were the first national warships I met after 33,000 kilometres of travel.

It seemed to me then that I had regained contact with the Fatherland,

I alighted on the Whangpoo, near the buoy prepared for my mooring; but because of the current I had a collision with a “sampan” that was supposed to help me, and I suffered a slight damage to the leading edge of the right wing, then quickly repaired by the shipwright of the San Giorgio.

In the river the current was very strong and made it very difficult to refuel and any other work; in fact, while the worker was repairing the wing on board a boat, the latter, due to the undertow produced by a ship that had passed by the aircraft, hit under the wing, producing two or three more holes in the canvas.

Thousands of junks with full sails went up and down the course of the river. It was truly a fantastic sight to see those slow, black river vehicles, with their sails often in tatters and badly patched up. invade the muddy waters of the Whangpoo as if an entire population were migrating en masse to other shores. They looked like real houseboats: some did

not even lack a small hanging garden, and chickens and piglets ran around the deck as in the courtyard of a country house. Many families of poor Chinese, true water nomads, spend their entire lives, from birth to the grave, on the junks. When a scion reaches a mature age to marry, he abandons his father's junk and on a new junk a new family is formed and developed.

They told me on the San Giorgio that once a junk dragged under the ship by the current broke up and was shipwrecked. The only survivor was a poor man, who had also lost his wife and children with the junk. A collection was soon organized. The poor devil went away. After a few days he reappeared with a new junk and a new wife to thank his benefactors! Everything passes and is renewed in this world!

With a smiling and respectful appearance, this prolific, hardworking and patient people, with a thousand-year-old civilisation, is today going through a crisis of transformation, which cannot be predicted to what results it may lead to in the more or less distant future. The movement is led by professors and students gathered in secret groups and is basically nationalist and anti-foreign. The great mass, except that of the large centres, is indifferent and unaware.

To this movement are added the struggles between various generals for the conquest of the central government and for personal ends. The soldiers pass with the greatest ease from the banners of one to the other general, because they care nothing but to be paid. The rest is of no importance to them,

The population of the countryside lives scattered in territories of enormous vastness, cultivating fields of rice. For them the enemies are the tax collectors. Very large provinces deprived of easy communication with each other, governed by mandarins who do not respect the central authority, which on the other hand is powerless against them, form this vast empire, which is rather an agglomeration of states inhabited by peoples of the same race and language, over which the republic has still more limited and almost illusory powers.

The existence of the Chinese is informed by an original philosophy which is very interesting to study, the effects of which are seen in many small episodes of common life. They despise death and are insensitive to physical pain and torture. In Shanghai they had to organise an Indian police force, but when they had to face some risk during their service, retreated; so that in the moment of need the police did not work at all.

In my short stop I also went to visit the highest Chinese authority in Shanghai, who gave me and Ernesto a small souvenir. We were also awarded a Chinese decoration of an aviation character, because, if there is not yet an important aviation in China, there is on the other hand a special order of chivalry that can only be obtained by aviators for flying feats,

The Italian Colony of Shanghai gave us great celebrations and gave us a commemorative plaque. We were received on the San Giorgio by the Admiral and all the officers.

The Association of Former British Pilots of Shanghai wanted to have us in its headquarters, where our English comrades welcomed us very festively and sympathetically.

Shanghai aircraft ca 1925

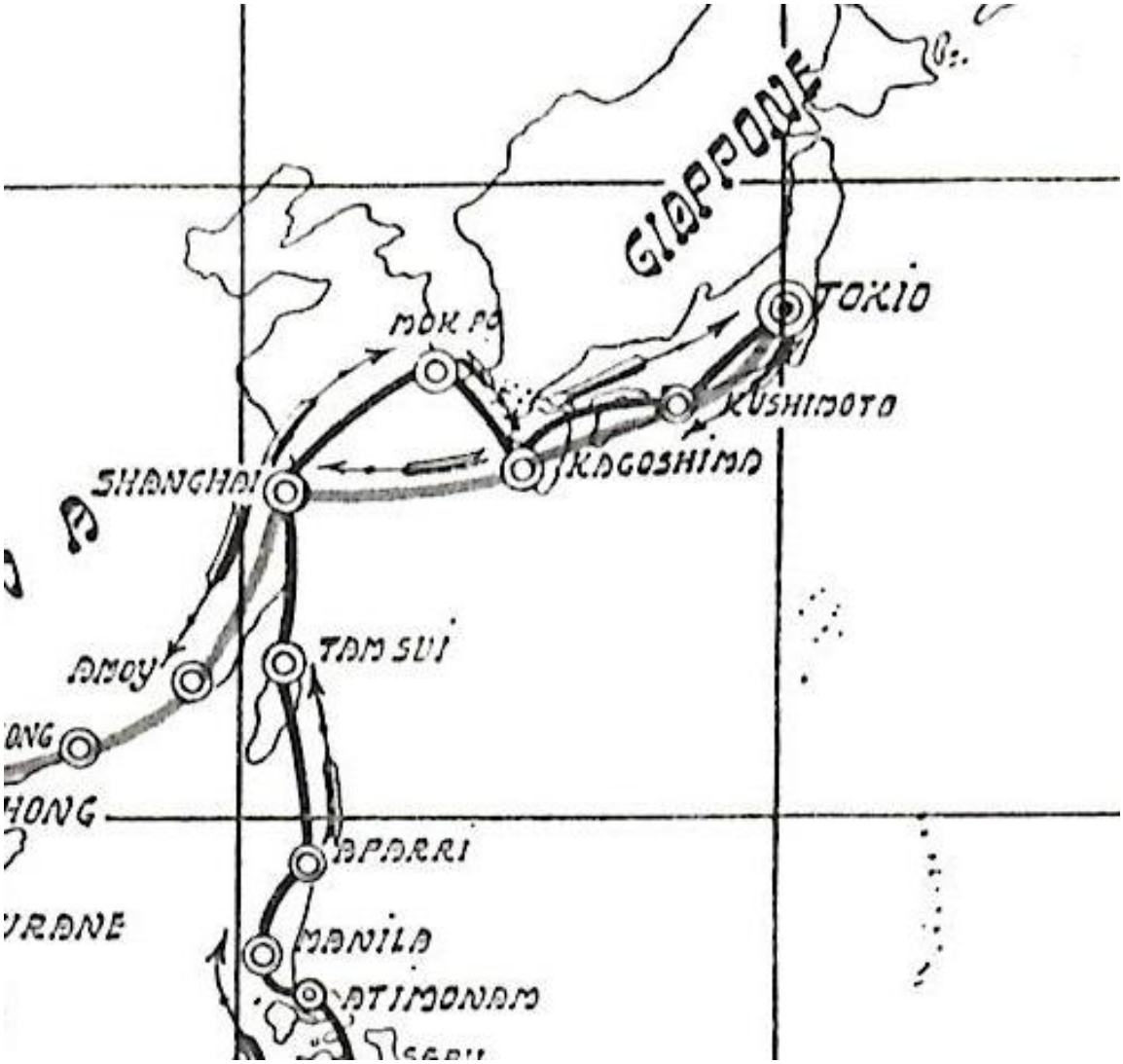
”In 1923, the British magazine *Flight* reported what it termed the first successful flight of an aircraft constructed in China. This conventional biplane was designed by a German engineer, Leopold Carl Ferdinand Friedrich Schoettler. Its engine, instruments, wheels and dope for fabric covering were imported from Europe. All else was locally sourced”.

Another Chinese-built biplane, the Rosamonde, appears in a photo dated 1923. “This is the first aeroplane built in China,” reads the caption. “Designed May 1923. Flown July 1923. The ‘Rosamonde’ (named in honour of Mrs. Sun Yat-Sen)”

Information directly from https://simanaitissays.com , not from Francesco’s book!/

Japan: 26 September to 17 October

September 23 to Mokpo



Map 5: China and Japan

On Tuesday, September 22nd, the repair work on the wing and the engine checks continued. Not being sure that I could take off with a full load, I could not think of crossing the 950 kilometres that separate Shanghai from Kagoshima with a single flight. The Japanese had advised me to make a stop in Mokpo towards the end of the Korean Peninsula, but the official authorization had not yet arrived. In the meantime, since Tam Sui, I had arranged for the transfer to Mokpo of my supplies that were in Chemulpo, and I had been assured that by the 23rd these supplies would certainly arrive.

On the morning of the 23rd, after the authorisation to alight at Mokpo had been communicated, I went on board the aircraft. Again due to the strong current, the unmooring manoeuvre was very laborious, the first attempt at take-off failed, and it took

almost an hour to cool the engine and be towed by the motorboat to a better position. At 11.30 I was able to be in the air, and after a tour of the city and our ships I set course for at 60°, at an altitude of about 400 metres.

The sea was calm. A slight haze prevented us from seeing very far. The sky was covered with layers of clouds between 500 and 1000 metres. Light SW wind.

After two hours and three-quarters of flying I passed in sight of Ross Island, and, being able to rectify the position then, I was pleased to find that I was perfectly on course. Around three o'clock in the afternoon I was on Mokpo, after passing over countless islands and islets of the jagged Korean coast.

I alighted by a boat with a flag, which I understood wanted to show me the mooring place, and took the buoy prepared for me. The petrol and oil, however, had not yet arrived, and I said that they would arrive in the afternoon,

We stayed in a Japanese hotel, where the owner and the manager in charge of the service welcomed us by prostrating themselves to the ground, according to Japanese custom. We took off our shoes, as it is not permitted to enter a Japanese house with them, and conversing with our guests, all crouched on the ground, we waited for the arrival of supplies; but not even with the train that arrived in the afternoon from Chemulpo did we have gasoline and oil, nor any news about their shipment. I decided to make up for it with local resources so as not to delay my arrival in Japan unnecessarily, and to take advantage of the weather conditions that seemed quite good. The next morning I therefore took on board about 250 litres of automobile gasoline and 12 litres of castor oil, which were supplied to me by a local pharmacy.

At 12.40 we were ready, but the weather report, telegraphed to us from Kagoshima, said: overcast weather and rain. I decided to leave anyway because the advanced season and the local conditions did not allow me to predict that in the following days the weather would improve. At about 12.45 I was in the air.

The sky was overcast, and without wind, I headed directly for Kagoshima, At 3.15 pm, in sight of the island of Gotoshima, the rain began. As we went on, the wind grew stronger and stronger from the east, and below us the sea appeared more and more rough,

the wind from the east greatly reduced my speed; I then drew still nearer to the east, in order to gain the coast more quickly. At 4 pm I entered a violent rainfall, from which I finally found myself on land, just south of Nagasaki. So I began to follow the coast between continuous rainfall, but by now I was calm, having the possibility at any time to alight in good conditions; the sea, given the east wind, was calm everywhere under the coast.

At 4.40 pm I was near Shimahìra. Shortly afterwards I encountered a strong storm: very black clouds that reached almost to the water, and rain in torrents. Although I kept no more than 100 metres from the coast, at a certain point I completely lost sight of it. I

then went offshore to get out of the rain and followed the coast in the opposite direction to Shimahira, where I landed, determined to wait for the passage of the storm.

It was about 5 pm They had never seen an aircraft in that small village, and in spite of the rain, a swarm of boats soon surrounded us, full of curious people of all ages and conditions under huge paper umbrellas.

I succeeded, in talking for a long time, in sending a telegram to Kagoshima, in which I asked for the weather report and warned the authorities of the unexpected landing.

I therefore realised that it was not advisable to remain in that place; and at 6 pm, as the gale had passed, I took off again, resuming navigation along the coast. To go to Kagoshima I would have had to pass over a narrow mountain isthmus, no more than 25 kilometres wide, but the altitude of the mountains was not known, and the clouds descended almost to the sea. Wouldn't it have been prudent to overland, not even knowing the weather I would find beyond the isthmus? But I went on skirting the coast, which made the journey longer than an hour; but that had to be accepted.

By this time the sun had set, the headlights were already on, and the small lights of the villages could be seen here and there on the coast. The volcanic coast had a wild and picturesque appearance. It started raining again. At 6.35 pm I entered the gulf, but it was late, and that little bit of twilight was just enough to alight . Therefore, passing in front of Yamagawa, which seemed to me to have the air of an excellent sheltered harbor, I decided to wait for the night there, postponing the arrival in Kagoshima until tomorrow. And so I alighted at Yamagawa.

In the meantime, our delay had caused Kagoshima a great disappointment in the crowd that awaited us, and finally also some concern, given the bad state of the weather. The telegram I sent from Yamagawa calmed the minds of the waiters. Some journalists and a pilot officer, whom the Ministry of the Navy had placed at our disposal, immediately organized an expedition by car to come and see us and to get news. I was presented with a program for the following day. In accordance with the wish expressed to me by the Japanese authorities, I had to postpone my departure to the afternoon, so that the established program could be fully carried out.

October 25 to Kagoshima

On the morning of the 25th, we cleaned up the aircraft. I went with my new Japanese friends to a famous hot spring resort near Yamagawa, where I immersed myself in a restorative bath. At 2 pm I left, arriving after about half an hour in Kagoshima. I was finally at my first stop on Japanese soil.

For our arrival everything had been meticulously prepared and organized, and it had been mathematically established what we should do minute by minute. For me, the main thing was that this time the aircraft was able to dock on the beach, and then quickly refuel.

Even in Kagoshima the school pupils took great interest when we arrived; We attended a parade of about 1000 schoolchildren with their teachers at the head. Various speeches were read to me by the authorities, gathered on a special platform, and gifts were offered to us. I had to talk to the school children. The enthusiasm that those little Japanese showed was really moving.

27 October to Tokyo (Kasumigaura)

On September 26 at 6 am we were on board, but I couldn't take off until 7. The weather was very calm, and we well deserved it after the past misadventures. After an hour we encountered moderate wind from the north, which made us drift on the straight, slowing our path. I had thought of gliding to Kushimoto to refuel and be in Tokyo the same evening, or rather in Kasumigaura, which is the seaplane station closest to the capital, being forbidden to alight in Tokyo Bay.

The route from Kagoshima to Kushimoto was almost all offshore, out of sight of the coast, which is very irregular. I cut straight so as not to lose time. Before I got to Kushimoto I had to alight by the Murotosaki cape, because I was about to lose the zinc cover of the radiator, having taken off the rod that held it in place. I alighted and took off again immediately after, without even stopping the engine.

I was in Kushimoto at 11.15 and I landed in the place indicated to me on the map in Kagoshima by the Japanese pilots; but the indications received were wrong, and I realised it shortly after landing . I laughed again and this time landed at the right point. While Ernesto very quickly refuelled the petrol and oil, I stayed with the local authorities. exchanging toasts and greetings with them. Two carrier pigeons were also dropped with a message to announce my arrival in Kushimoto in Osaka.

At 12.40 I left for my last stage, and in this I had the last example of the bad weather. I had to go far offshore from land while passing Tokyo, since it was considered a military zone, and only at 3 pm I was able to go overland, heading for Kasumigaura which remains about 25 kilometres from the coast, on the bank of a river. At 3.45 pm I was in sight of the hangars of Kasumigaura.

Just at that moment a strong storm arrived from the north, which made the last ten minutes of flight difficult and eventful. Although there were many authorities waiting for my arrival, no one noticed me until after I had alighted, for no one expected to see me appear on the land side, and they all looked in the direction of the river. So I did not even meet with the aircraft sent to meet me, which after about an hour landed in all that revelry of wind and rain, convinced that I had not arrived.

The wind and gusts were really impetuous, and the rain very heavy. As soon as I touched water, I dropped anchor, but I ploughed slowly towards the land due to the force of the wind. The motorboat, which came to tow me, fouled its rudder with a rope, causing it to hit the aircraft. Another was sent, and at last after an hour's work, in which I admired the good will and great skill of the Japanese sailors, we were able to put the seaplane to safety and, still in the rain, go ashore.

The authorities and the public who were waiting for us had taken shelter under a hangar, where a large table had been set for refreshments.

The Admiral, commander of the seaplane base at Kasumigaura, welcomed us on behalf of the Minister of the Navy and offered us sake and chestnuts, which symbolize victory with a local rite. The Italian Ambassador greeted me on behalf of the Government.

The most difficult part of the journey was now complete.

(Comment on Japanese aviation, 1925)

A nice artistic depiction for domestic consumption,

The Mitsubishi B1M, designed by the British aircraft designer Herbert Smith (formerly of the Sopwith aircraft company) was made in Japan and first flew in January 1923.

The type replaced the Imperial Japanese Navy's Glouchestershire Sparrowhawks, entering service in 1924 and serving as the navy's principal attack and reconnaissance aircraft into the 1930s, with 32 flying from the aircraft carriers Kaga and Hōshō during the Shanghai Incident in 1932. Later models added a third crew member and an extended range of 400 miles. Total production was 443.

(from the website www.oldtokyo.com.)

Japan had an early interest in military aviation and indeed Japanese Farman seaplanes had conducted the first seaplane wartime military action when Japan seized the German settlement of Tsingtao in November 1914. After World War I Japan acquired German island possessions in the Pacific as mandates from the League of Nations. In theory these were supposed to be simple protectorates, but Japan was assuming complete control and developing them as military bases, Hence the secrecy which was such a problem for Francesco – for example see page 151. We can see how the Japanese were building a very effective airborne military, even in 1925. (Editor's note).

*In the Land of the Rising Sun

I had arrived in Kasumigaura on Saturday afternoon. The naval attaché warned me that, since there was a program already agreed with the Japanese authorities and I had arrived a day early, I could not go to Tokyo before the following Monday; I would therefore have to wait as in a kind of quarantine in Kasumigaura.

I immediately took advantage of the stop to draw up the program of the work, which I could not have done if the series of banquets and official receptions had certainly begun.

In Kasumigaura I had a replacement engine, which had already arrived some time ago. I had also sent from Hong Kong (which as the central point of the whole itinerary was my main storage base for spare parts), all the spare parts of the aircraft, which however were lying in customs in Yokohama.

Welcome at Kushimoto

From Shanghai I had also obtained, with the permission of the Admiral who commanded the Italian division stationed in those waters, the dispatch to Tokyo of an engineer and a fitter of the Royal Air Force: they were there at that time with one of our Missions, and now had to repatriate. They would have helped Ernesto in the work to be done on the aircraft.

I decided to immediately disassemble the engine and also to disassemble the tanks, in order to check the inside of the hull well, to dry it and then to repaint it. Ernesto got to work busily and by Sunday afternoon the engine was already on the ground. The tanks and all accessories were dismantled, as well as the control cables of the rudders and

ailerons, which had not been touched from the beginning of the journey. They were found to be in excellent condition.

Even the hull, although a little dirty, a little faded from long stays in the water, was as strong and robust as when leaving Italy.

Never before had a flying hull been subjected to such continuous effort and in such different and difficult conditions of climate and temperature: I believe that even the most sceptical about the practicality of air vehicles will have nothing to complain about.

On Sunday evening, therefore, everything was ready to begin the internal cleaning and painting work, which the Commander of the Kasumigaura Seaplane Base kindly offered to have his men carry out.

On the 28th we went to Tokyo, now calm about the seaplane. We retraced, by train, a part of the route we had travelled by flight, finding Kasumigaura north-east of Tokyo. We were received at the station by General Naga Oku, president of the Royal Aviation Society, and other authorities. A Japanese maiden, the daughter of an admiral, gave us a lovely speech in French on behalf of the aviation company. It was the first time that I had received such a greeting during my journey, which made a very pleasant impression on me.

We were accommodated at the Imperial Hotel, guests for the first days of the Ministry of the Navy.

This hotel was a strange earthquake-proof construction, Babylonian style, in brick and marble that resembled Travertine. It had been tested by the last earthquake that destroyed the capital of the Empire in half; The monumental building of the hotel had withstood the terrible test, with only slight damage of a few floors and a few broken dishes.

The style was not very cheerful, for entering the hall it seemed as if one were in the funeral temple of a cemetery. The rooms were as small as cells, and in the smallest details of the furniture, the curtains, the carpets, the lights, the pious objects, the intimacy was a scrupulous harmony with the style, the heaviness of which contrasted strangely with the cheerful and lively colours of the kimonos of the many servants.

A complete programme of official ceremonies lasting a week had already been established in Tokyo, and in which provision was made for the use which I was to make of my days, from the early hours of the morning to the late hours of the night. I am not talking about the countless banquets and receptions offered to us and the visits I had to make. However, I retain a grateful memory of them, because everywhere I had the opportunity to appreciate the cordiality and sympathy with which I was welcomed. A great number of gifts were presented to us everywhere, according to Japanese custom.

I had long and interesting conversations with the Minister of the Navy. who had placed at my disposal a frigate captain, and I found the work of organization of the Navy and the progress achieved in the construction and use of aircraft truly admirable. The Minister,

who had been elected to this office for a long time in the past, impressed me as a man of broad and modern views, and I also noticed that he was highly esteemed and appreciated by his officers.

I paid a visit to the Minister of War, and very chivalrous with a glass of champagne the memory of the Tamsui incident was certainly erased.

The various banquets of pure Japanese style, in which I took part, were a novelty for me, set in the best restaurants. Of course, it was necessary to leave the shoes at the door; Each diner had a small table in front of him no more than ten centimetres high from the ground, and he was crouched on the floor on a small cushion, cross-legged. I confess that I could not get used to such a position, because after a certain time my knees became sore and it was necessary to stretch my legs here or there, thus assuming a pose that was perhaps not very convenient.

I am not talking about the foods to which it was not possible for me to do honour, being too different from those to which our palate is accustomed. They told me, in this regard, that Chinese cuisine, which I have not had the opportunity to taste, is even more refined and richer than Japanese, and a companion of mine, secretary at the Embassy in Tokyo, told me that he had attended a Chinese dinner in which, among other things, a live chimpanzee was served, whose skull was split with a silver hammer, each diner taking a piece of the still smoking brain with a teaspoon. This, he told me, was a very tasty dish. Maybe, but fortunately Japanese cuisine did not reach these refinements.

The Japanese dinner was also characterized by an excellent custom: the speeches were given at the beginning of the meal, so that those poor people forced to make toasts, could then quietly honour the dishes. I found this custom very practical, and worthy of being adopted by us as well. Elsewhere it had often happened to me during the journey, sitting as always in the place of honour, to be near a personage who during lunch was preoccupied with the imminent speech. I found myself in the same conditions, and sometimes we talked together about indifferent things; but it was evident that neither of them paid attention to what the other said, each brooding in his own brain the toast to be pronounced at the end.

The service during lunch was performed by a crowd of geishas, who performed characteristic items between one course and another. These girls are specially recruited at an early age, especially from poor families. Once they were even offered for sale, but now buying and selling is no longer allowed. They are then educated in special institutes, where they learn literature, singing, music and dance; and they devote themselves to that of the arts for which they have the greatest inclination. There is no shortage of very renowned schools, from which the best artists come out. When their education is complete, the geisha come into operation with their songs and dances, both on the occasion of religious festivals in the temples, and for the more profane purpose of cheering the guests in private parties or public banquets. They embellish themselves a lot, and with white rice dust with which they cover their faces, with that

deep red with which they mark their lips, with their enormous hair, true architectural monuments, decorated with artificial flowers and put up by dint of glitter, pins and hairpins, they have the air of real self-propelled puppets. They are on average much smaller than men, they have an unspeakable grace in all their acts and movements, and a gentle smile however artificial. They are dressed in very rich “kimonos”, admirable for the harmony of their designs and colours, true works of art, often very ancient: gifts from their Japanese friends, who spend fabulous sums on them.

It is precisely in these restaurants that the Japanese are accustomed to deal with their most important affairs, between pleasant conversation and the gay spectacle of the dancers. Is this not a more philosophical and more playful system than ours, which thus softens the crudeness of modern life?

After the series of official ceremonies, I took advantage of the little free time to make a quick run to Kyoto, the oldest and most interesting city in Japan. Unfortunately I happened to be there on a rainy day, but this did not prevent me from admiring the magnificent vision of a city so different from ours in all manifestations of art and life. I saw the oldest and holiest temples in Japan. They are made of wood; huge square tree trunks support the roof; inside there is a large statue of Buddha, in front of which the faithful place their offerings. Characteristic, yes, these temples, but not imposing; they have nothing that can even remotely stand up to comparison with the marvellous and innumerable beauties of the monuments erected by pagan civilisation and the Christian faith.

Where the Japanese attain great perfection is in the art of cultivating and arranging their gardens. Here appears all the love and veneration they have for Mother Earth. In a very small space, they reconstruct in miniature with a perfect imitation a picturesque and rugged landscape: small lakes, waterfalls, streams crossed by bridges, ramps and caves and groves, rich in the rarest and most varied plants.

The major trees are, with a patient method. reduced to even microscopic dimensions. The seeds are grown in very small pots, thus limiting the development of the roots. The same treatment is done to the branches; and so trees, which in their natural state measure tens of metres in height, live an anaemic and stunted life, remaining so dwarf that they do not exceed a maximum height of 50 centimetres.

Thus I visited the gardens of Kyoto, considered among the most beautiful in Japan, an admirable product of age-old patient care and a subtle and refined taste.

The Japanese are truly unattainable in the decorative arts, and I was ecstatic to see in some shops in Kyoto the magnificent lacquers, the work of the brushes of illustrious artists, and the splendid coloured silks and painted screens, and a hundred and one minute ornamental accessories, always treated with taste and exquisite finesse. I saw in a lacquer factory that the finest of them were obtained by repassing and drying the colour up to a hundred times. It really takes the wonderful patience and perseverance of a Japanese!

What seemed absent to me was the masterpiece, the fruit of genius and a superior aesthetic vision of life.

The Japanese love to collect art and ancient objects: the richest spend enormous sums to get old armour, ancient paintings, lacquers by famous authors, and other valuable objects. But nothing is on display in the houses. Where does all this good stuff go? They keep everything in large crates, which they open once a year to take out the objects locked up, to dust them, look at them, show them by chance to some friends and... to lock them up again until next year.

Among others, I visited the house of a well-known prince, who after the earthquake had built a special building of reinforced concrete to jealously guard all his coffers. Her kind wife proudly showed me some flowers artistically arranged in a vase:

“See! they represent the one-hour lesson I had before you arrived”.

“The one-hour lesson?”

“Exactly: we have a master who teaches us the art of decorating rooms with flowers”. This princess, is a proof of the gentle and refined Japanese soul.

Many of these masters live in Tokyo, from whom the girls and ladies take lessons as they would take music or singing lessons here.

In Kyoto I met with our Consul in Kobe, who has lived in Japan for many years and who acted as a guide. He speaks Japanese perfectly and also knows the archaic language. He took me, during my brief stop, to a Japanese theatre, where a well-known historical drama was being performed.

Of course I did not understand anything of the language, and in the meantime the Consul gave me an interesting explanation of the customs and traditions of the local theatre. Actors in Japan are not, as we have done, the respect and sympathy of the educated public, but are rather considered as the ancient Romans considered the histrionics. In an interval I went to the stage where I was introduced to the head comedian, one of the most famous of modern Japan. He prostrated himself on the ground. and as long as I was in his dressing room he did not move from that position, precisely because he was in the habit of considering himself and being considered of an inferior social class.

Although I did not understand anything of what the actors said that evening, I noticed that they were artists of a correctness and sobriety perhaps difficult to find in ours, if not among the best. The actors entered the stage crossing the entire audience on a kind of catwalk. The theatre was its largest size in the sense of the stage, and the audience was naturally nestled on the ground. I saw only a part of the long spectacle which, begun in the early hours of the afternoon, would end in the late hours of the night!

I left Kyoto with the regret of not being able to stay there any longer, and as soon as I returned to Tokyo I set to work to speed up the preparations for my return. Ernesto was working as usual busily, and had already prepared the new engine, helped by the two

mechanics who had come from Shanghai. I felt very sorry. I remember, to have some spare materials transported from Yokohama to Kasumigaura that were there in customs. I had thought of changing the lower wings of the aircraft, which, although they were in good condition, had some patching here and there due to the shocks suffered throughout the journey; but with regret I realised that the replacement were useless, except one, because they had been exposed to the sun and rain for a long time, and the canvas had completely rotted.

On the whole I only changed, more as a precaution than out of real necessity, the side floats, the control cables and the lower right wing plane. The aircraft was all cleaned and repaired with tar and insulating tape. The work was very successful, because on the return voyage not a drop of water penetrated the hull.

During my stay in Tokyo, I was able to see what a huge disaster the last earthquake had produced. The city had been rebuilt in the districts devastated by the fire with temporary buildings, since the municipality had taken the opportunity of the disaster to put into force a new zoning plan. Except that the studies were still continuing, and in the meantime it was not possible to build.

Tokyo has an enormous size, because only the main government buildings, banks, embassies and the most important shops are masonry and multi-storey; all the rest of the city is composed of infinite houses reduced to the rudimentary expression of a ground floor and a roof. On the front, in general, there is a shop in front of a house, all of course in wood and paper: the latter is widely used in Japan as a building material. I remember in a small hotel in Jamagawa, while I was getting dressed one morning, I almost ended up in the adjoining room through the paper wall, having inadvertently leaned against it. On the whole, the houses are therefore safe against seismic movements, but they are terribly threatened by fires, such as the one that destroyed half of Tokyo after the last famous earthquake. The outer walls of the houses and the main beams alone are fixed. The internal divisions are made by means of removable partitions, and therefore if necessary all the rooms can be reunited and transformed into a large hall. Beds do not exist: only in the evening are mattresses laid on the floor, generally of silk, and Quilted blankets, also of silk in bright colours and sometimes of inestimable value.

On one of the last days I went to visit the Military Museum, where I saw the aircraft used by Ferrarin on his journey from Rome to Tokyo in 1920. The aircraft was kept with great care, suspended from the ceiling of one of the main rooms, with many signs and many writings that recalled the event. I stood looking at him with sincere admiration, because he was the first in the history of aviation who had travelled one of the major lines of intercontinental communication. Also on display in the Museum was rich armour from the medieval era, from which Japan can be said to have emerged not many years ago. The collection of various relics belonging to General Nogi, who, as is well known,

performed “karakiri” together with his wife on the Mikado's tomb is highly venerated. And also preserved is the dagger, with which the famous warrior had committed suicide.

My guide, Frigate Captain Hara San, explained to me the technique, so to speak, of “karakiri”: the patient volunteer sticks the appropriate dagger (since there is a special type for this use) in his belly with his right hand and with the hilt tilted to the left, and then carries the hilt from left to right so as to produce a large horizontal gash. The most stoic bring the dagger back two or three times from right to left and vice versa.

This attachment to traditions and patriotic spirit are undoubtedly the main characteristics of modern Japan.

During the time I was in Tokyo there was some small scandal in the news, so the newspapers made a crusade against bad habits. Well, in those days a Japanese belonging to the working classes made karakiri, leaving written that he wanted to warn the present generations not to abandon the traditions of simple and patriarchal Japanese life, which had led his country to greatness, while modern corruption could lead it to decay.

They also told me that when the law of emigration was approved in the United States, which limited the annual quota of emigrants that Japan could send to North America, many Japanese, in protest against the government that was suffering a measure considered almost a decrease in the prestige of the nation, performed the “karakiri” in front of the Foreign Ministry.

But now this custom, once very widespread, is being lost.

I believe that one of the reasons why in Japan foreigners are sometimes welcomed with not too much sympathy, is due to the lack of tact that some of them show, considering the Japanese, in private or official relations, as belonging to a race of an inferior class.

The Japanese are as proud a people as ever, and rightly believe that they are in no way inferior to peoples of any other race. What is said or printed about the superiority of the white race deeply wounds national self-esteem; on the contrary, the Japanese are very cordial and very friendly to those who esteem them and to those who show sympathy and interest in them.

Education in Japan is widespread, despite the great difficulties of the written language, which forces you to spend many years in schools just to learn ideographic characters. It takes about eight years to learn to write, because the written language is not, like the European languages, made up of a few signs that represent sounds, but instead of a series of signs or, I would almost say, of small figurations that represent a concept. And just as a spoken language has thousands and thousands of different sounds to express different concepts or things, so the written language has thousands and thousands of different figures to express different things and concepts. Learning to write costs the Japanese the same effort it costs us to learn another language; not only that: few reach perfection and I saw many Japanese, belonging to the most educated classes,

sometimes remain in doubt to decipher a writing or to write, let's say, the dedication on a photograph. The biggest complication then occurs in typewriters, which are therefore rarely used. There are some with about two or three thousand characters of complicated use, not to mention the size: almost those of a newspaper “linotype”.

Another peculiarity is this: while in Italy handwriting has a personal imprint and is one of the signs of recognition of the writer, so much so that graphologists even believe they can deduce the various aspects of the character from the handwriting, in Japanese writing there are no very marked differences due to the writing hand; so that in commercial practices the signature, which in our case is the particular sign of the writer, is represented by a special seal or stamp, which is jealously guarded by the owner.

In all houses the so-called poems are held in great honour, that is, a few sentences that express a certain concept due to the mind of a poet or a personality, and which are written in broad brushstrokes and enclosed in a painting, the value of these poems is not only in their spirit, but also in the style, I will say so, pictorial.

As for the progress and development of modern civilisation, Japan can hold its own against the most advanced European nations; and there is nothing of modern inventions that does not have an extensive application in Japan as well. Some of the educated classes expressed to me their regret in seeing that sometimes Japan, like other Oriental nations, is not appreciated and esteemed by Europeans as it deserves. Then I replied that perhaps this is a reflection of our historical education, because certainly in antiquity there existed in Europe a superior civilisation conscious of its value and therefore eager to expand among the then less civilised peoples, otherwise it would have been the Japanese or the Chinese, let us say, who would have discovered Europe and spread their civilisation in it.

Japan, on the other hand, is now a nation that needs to give vent to its dense population, which is growing every year in a worrying way.

I believe that the Americans have nothing to fear from Japan, leaving the doors a little more open to emigration. In practice, the bias against emigration to America is simply due to economic reasons, since the native workers fear cheap competition from workers from other countries who need employment, foreseeing that if they were left free rein, wages would be lowered. But certainly the problem is not solved in this way, because an exuberant race cannot be condemned to live within narrow walls; Rather than postponing the solution of the problem to possible conflicts in the future, it would be better to provide for and provide for the present by wise agreements between the parties involved.

Japanese-American conflict: neither of the two peoples would have anything to gain. There is enough room for everyone in the world for now. It is a matter of amicably distributing the available space. Discoveries, modern inventions and advances in mechanics have ended up revolutionizing social life compared to what it was still a few years ago. Everyone runs to enrichment to procure the greatest possible amount of well-

being; but, as in the life of an individual, so in the life of nations true well-being is obtained from that of all and not from the well-being procured at the expense of others, for this ends, in the long run, leading to contrasts that destroy all benefit.

On the other hand, the situation of Japan and America is such that a war would lead them to attack each other with more or less serious offenses without a definite solution; and therefore the two parties involved would end up receiving damage certainly greater than the advantages that could be obtained from a possible final success.

Before leaving Tokyo, I went to pay homage to the Shinto Temple, where the Unknown Soldier is worshipped, not, as in Italy, because in Japan all soldiers who died in war are known and identified, but the symbol, I will say, of the soldier who died for the fatherland.

The Shinto Temple consists of a kind of rectangular wooden portico, having a small mirror on one side that represents an altar, on which offerings consisting of a laurel branch are made. This twig was first given to me by the priest, who waved the air with it two or three times to drive away evil spirits.

The ceremonial is, as can be seen, of extreme simplicity.

When we withdrew from the temple, it was raining. We were offered large paper umbrellas and so the singular procession composed of Shinto priests, Japanese officers, the Italian naval attaché in uniform and the writer set off for the exit. To an outsider, the scene must have been quite original. I then found at the hotel, the day before my departure, four amulets from the Shinto temple, consisting of a few sentences written on tiny pieces of paper, and which I kept religiously together with the many others I had.

By train I often went to Kasumigaura.

Communications between Tokyo and Kasumigaura left something to be desired. The road was impassable and the railway for the many stops was not a very fast means of transport.

Thus I was able to form an idea of the profound innate education and courtesy of even the humblest classes. Never a lofty word, an altercation. a fight. Everyone is full of respect for his neighbour. Verbal abuse does not exist in Japan:

“Stupid” is the most provocative word that can be addressed to another man, and it is considered a very serious offense. On the train, it was curious to see that most of the travellers preferred to take off their shoes and snuggle up on the cushions.

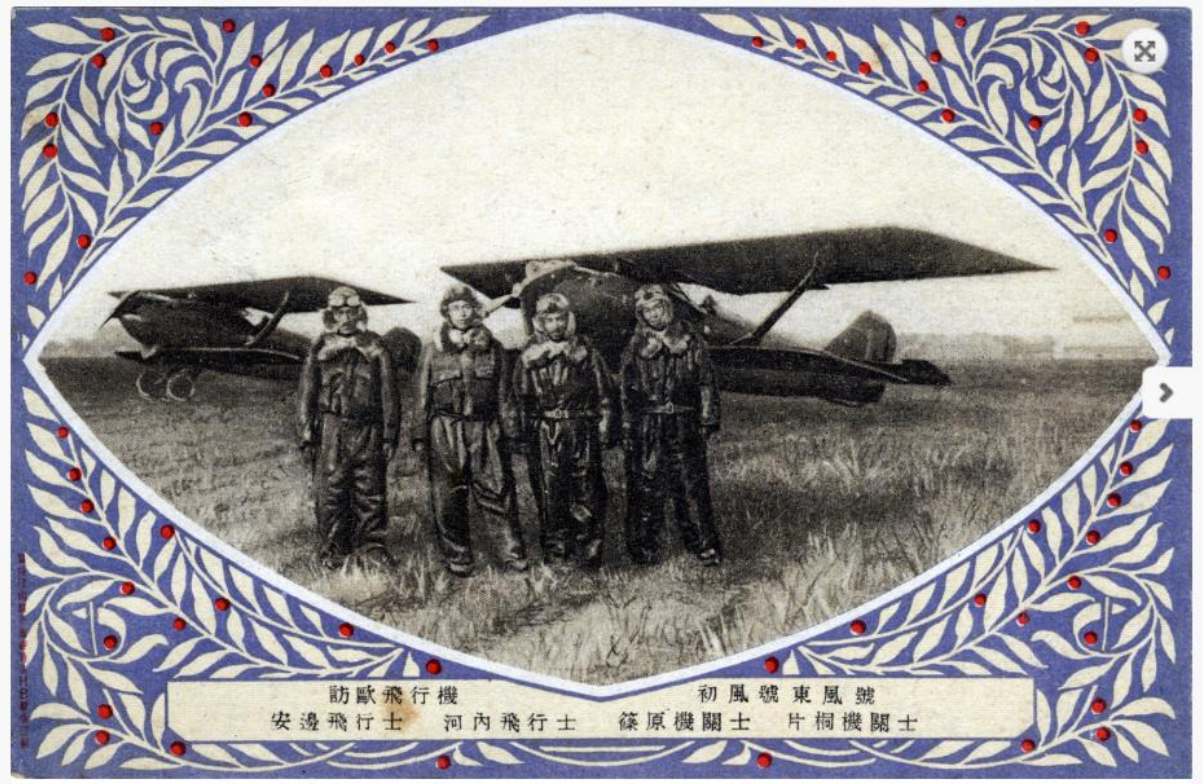
Meanwhile Campanelli with his two good assistants worked with great energy, arousing the admiration of those who had the opportunity to observe his uncommon ability.

Many engineers and technicians came to visit the aircraft, supposing in it some special constructive secret, such as to allow such good conservation and efficiency through a route that, even then, represented little less than a trip around the world. They found it hard to believe that it was an ordinary standard aircraft.

I had therefore proposed to return to Italy on November 4, on the occasion of the Feast of Victory; but, as much as Campanelli worked with great energy, the days passed, and from day to day it was always necessary, for some small new work, to postpone the final test of the engine. I saw my project fade away.

(Japanese aircraft also flew to Italy in 1925!)

(this remarkable exploit is not mentioned in de Pinedo's writing)



From the website the website www.oldtokyo.com : "Japanese aviators both military and civilian showed remarkable activity in 1924-25. First to mention in this respect was the successful flight made by our navy aviators from Yokosuka to Peking in May 1925. This was the first seaplane flight from Japan to a foreign land.

"A far more ambitious undertaking was the aerial visit to Europe across Siberia carried out by the enterprising Osaka and Tokyo Asahi Shimbun, beginning July 25. Two Asahi [Breguet Bre. 19 A.2] planes, Hatsukaze *(First wind) and* Kochikaze *(East wind), fitted with 400-hp Lorraine-Dietrich engines, piloted by Army flight officers Abe Hiroshi and Kawachi Kazuhiko respectively, safely reached Moscow in the latter part of August.*

"They further proceeded on their way and visited Paris on September 27, then London on Oct 12, and Rome Oct 27. The time required in covering 9,656 kilometres between Yoyogi [Tokyo] and Moscow was 66 hr. 30 min. for the Hatsukaze*, and 67 hr. for the* Kochikaze*; the aviators stopping 16 days at various points en route."*

*Tokyo to Rome: 17 October to 7 November

The last part of the journey from Tokyo to Rome had more advantages than the previous ones. It was now easy for me to telegraph to warn of my arrival at the various stages and then to arrange the supplies, so that they could be done in the most expeditious manner.

At the end of September the West Monsoon season ended and a period of calm or winds from the East and North-East began, especially favourable for going down the coasts of China, where I had planned some rather long crossings. An area of rain and bad weather was expected in Siam, after which, however, I would have had good weather and light winds in the crossing of North India, and then generally good weather as far as the Mediterranean; I was anxious to arrive here as soon as possible. because in November the weather is often bad and the winds very strong. There were only a few unknowns about the Persian Gulf, due to the cyclones that raged in the vicinity from time to time. A good factor for fast travel was the fact that, going westward, I gained a period of time on daylight every day which was not to be despised. In addition, the phase of the full moon was approaching, which gave me the opportunity to finish a few stages in the moonlight if necessary. I could not, of course, ignore the unforeseen events that, in fact, I then had, but I had nevertheless prepared a travel program, which had to be completed from Tokyo to Rome in a fortnight. The unforeseen events, as we shall see, were not lacking, and made me lose five or six days.

On the eve of my departure I received a postal package from Shanghai containing my camera and my film camera, which, due to a false interpretation of the instructions given to Manila, were received by the Consul in Shanghai in Tokyo. This embarrassed me, because in Japan it was strictly forbidden to carry such apparatus on board. On the other hand, I didn't want to deprive myself of it, wanting to take some photographs on my way back. Instead I could not do anything because the plates, deteriorated and were all lost. The Japanese this time kindly allowed me to take the camera gear with me in sealed packages.

October 25 Tokyo to Kasumigaura

On October 15, I left Tokyo and moved permanently to Kasumigaura. The work was almost finished, but it was not possible to test the engine that day, as planned.

On the 16th it was possible to carry out the engine test on the ground, and I did the flight test. It was raining lightly. The new engine was fine. After an hour's flight I descended satisfied and had the aircraft prepared for departure.

That day by the Admiral, who commanded the seaplane station of Kasumigaura, I was given the Commandery of the Sacred Treasure; Campanelli was given another decoration of the same order: solemn presentation before all the crews of Kasumigaura lined up for the roll call. An honour that we appreciated very much and of which we were very proud.

*Beginning the jouirney

The morning of 17 October promised a day very similar to that of the departure from Sesto Calende; this made us very sad. Many authorities came kindly to greet us, wrapped in their raincoats. I also greatly appreciated the greeting of the mayor of Kasumi Gaura, who had defied, without any obligation, the strain of an early rise and a walk in the rain. I left to the two soldiers, who had helped me, all the provisions for the spare material to be sent to Italy or along the route, and at 6.25 I dropped the ropes, started the engine and took off.

It was always raining.

In some places I could barely distinguish the land and therefore had to sail very low. At 7.30 I was at Cape Nojima Zaki, where the rain was even torrential, combined with violent gusts. This made me consider whether it would be better for me to land near some point of the coast, to await more favourable conditions. But thinking back to the Tam Sui incidents, I refrained from it: the coast belonged to a forbidden military zone, and I didn't want to start the journey with another diplomatic incident. I decided to go ahead as much as I could, trusting in the engine that hummed in a perfect way. At the height of Oshima Island I found wind from the north. even stronger, and rough seas. At 8 am the bad zone was finally over; and since the wind turned to the East we could advance much more. I went on, sailing thus, over an always stormy sea, and at 9.30 I was in sight of Kushimoto.

Because of the wind from the East I could not land where I had landed the previous time; the strong undertow would have made it impossible to refuel and also difficult to start.

I made a couple of rounds to study the position, battered by dry whirlwinds and wind shifts, and finally landed to the west of the city, on the other side of the peninsula. in perfect shelter. I stopped and anchored as close as possible to the shore; and as the very strong wind made me doubt whether the anchor could catch me well, I sent a line to the bow of the land by means of a boat.

The curious, who crowded at the place where I had landed on the outward journey, began a kind of marathon to come and see me. The quickest legs who arrived first, while I was on a rickety boat going ashore, asked me for my usual autograph and helped me in return to take on board the cans of gasoline. A naval officer, whom the Japanese authorities had very courteously sent to Kushimoto at my disposal, had very cleverly placed a part of the gasoline where I actually disembarked, anticipating that I would be forced to do so by the state of the sea.

Everything went well. I was shown the Kagoshima weather report, which was good; the seals of my cameras were inspected and the petrol and oil tanks were quickly refilled; at 1.40 we were already ready to resume the flight. I said goodbye to the good friends who had come to the beach who had assisted me, and off I went again. The take-off was very

delicate, because the wind was impetuous and I could not distance myself from the beach because of the sea. I therefore had to make a slight conversion to the left, while the aircraft was already on the step, and make a very sharp turn in flight to avoid the masts of a brigantine that I had to touch.

The navigation from Kushimoto to Kagoshima was better than the previous one. I passed over dense cloud masses, over which a bright sun reigned. But above the clouds I could not regulate myself as to the strength and direction of the wind; about 1 pm, as soon as I saw land, I decreased in altitude and passed below, heading for Kagoshima and covering the last 50 kilometres on land to follow the shortest route, although I could, in a safer way, go around the coast.

The spectacle offered to me by the Gulf of Kagoshima, which this time I was able to admire in all its beauty, was truly superb. The Saduwara volcano fumigated slightly and the gulf was all a glory of sunshine and green coasts.

At 2.40 pm I landed to the usual place and stranded the aircraft on the beach, where I found the mayor and old acquaintances, including Mr Into, a Japanese who had helped us a lot in the previous passage; He was a great friend of our country, where he had travelled for a long time. Refuelling was soon organized with the help of some Japanese aviators belonging to the civilian services.

The new engine gave us reason to be very satisfied. The oil leaks were minimal, the functioning of all the systems was perfect. The hull of the aircraft, after the painting carried out in Tokyo, no longer let in a drop of water, which simplified our initial operations.

That day I did not miss tea at Into's house; but I went early to the hotel to study the route of the next day, not yet well specified.

At the hotel they gave us great parties; By now we were two old customers. This hotel, of pure Japanese type, had hosted all the aviators who had come to Japan by air.

In the evening I had a fairly comforting weather report. I made the last telegrams of greeting and thanks. I decided to head straight to Shanghai, skipping the stage in Korea: it was about 950 kilometres in the middle of the sea, but the engine gave me great confidence and security.

To Shanghai

When we left the hotel the next morning, it was still dark; nevertheless, the Japanese aviators of the civil services were also on their feet to see us leave. We were sincerely moved by the attentions of these simple and good people, who had given us a valid and so disinterested help in our short stop.

Although I got up very early, I could not leave before 7.20. As usual, I performed the compass check in flight, using a ground alignment. I immediately checked, leaving the coast, that the wind was drifting far to the south and I corrected the course of about I0° to the right.

Going further on, from the state of the sea and from the drift of the aircraft that I could calculate by eye, sailing very low on the water, I noticed that the wind from the north had still increased, and I decisively corrected the course of another 20° to the right; this was perhaps a bit exaggerated, but it was better for me in any case to land on Shanghai, after having discarded rather to the North than to the South, and this both in relation to the direction of the wind and the conformation of the coast.

Later, at about 10.20 am, the wind diminished considerably, as I perceived from the state of the sea, and at Hora I decreased the correction of the compass by about 20°. By 11 o'clock the wind had dropped completely, and I was then back on course for exactly 270°, which corresponded to the check I had made on the alignment on land before leaving the coast. At 11.30 I saw a great animation of sailing ships and steamers on the sea.

I must say here that, when, after a long journey on the open sea, I managed to find myself exactly on the target, it caused me an intimate satisfaction; the same satisfaction as the course officer, who manages to lead his ship brilliantly into port after a long and difficult navigation. However, while the ship, when in dangerous vicinity, can stop waiting for the position to be better controlled, I could only go on, and any mistake, even small, of appreciation could mark the end of the voyage.

When I assumed from my calculations that I had to spot the coast, I sharpened my gaze.

“There it is, I said to myself, on the left, something... It is the coastline. How we are discarded from the course! Yet the correction of the drift was right. Here we must be very careful... Beast! It's a cloud!”

Those minutes that passed, when due to the gloom or something else the earth did not appear at the calculated hour, seemed to me eternal. Finally, in order not to tire uselessly in the anxious search, I had resolved not to look at the horizon until d1 from the clock I had realised that I had long since passed within the range of visibility of the earth. So, when it suddenly appeared to me in its clear outlines, I felt a pleasure as for the unexpected arrival of a very reluctant and long-awaited friend.

On arriving on Chinese land we had made one of the longest stretches of sea, out of sight of the coast. I had to empirically correct the course and, if I had made a mistake, after 900 kilometres of travel I would have found myself in a very different place than the Chinese metropolis.

When I saw the steamers below me, although I could not yet see the land, I had the feeling of being all right. In fact, shortly afterwards the first bluish stripes, vague and indefinable, of the low and flat coast are discovered on the bow horizon. Little by little they take on more consistency, you begin to distinguish a cape, then a channel, then an island. There is no doubt: it is the Yangtze River, it is the Whangpoo. Further towards the bow, on the distant horizon, are the thousand fuming chimneys of Shanghai.

At 13.1 I was in Shanghai and, after taking a tour on the cruiser of our Royal Navy, “Libya”, I landed near the buoy, which this time I took with great circumspection, remembering the incident of the outward journey.

We were received by the Consul and the Commander of the “Libya”; I immediately provided for the replenishment of petrol and oil, intending to leave early the following morning.

On that day Shanghai was completely besieged by revolutionary troops, and the city's communications with the rest of China by land were cut. I spoke with various local elements, wanting to understand something about that situation that fascinated European public opinion. Except that opinions were divided: there was only one thing evident: that despite the siege, the city was quiet. I saw and understood that much had been exaggerated about what had happened or was happening in Shanghai, because even with the besieged city and with the communications interrupted, it was very well possible to obtain from the authorities from time to time the passage of some train to Beijing, through the lines of the besieging troops.

That evening I slept little, because my friends from the Italian Colony wanted to show me Shanghai by night, which it is useless to try to describe: by now the great international metropolises all have the same more or less developed program for night owls: the model is Paris, the others are more or less successful copies.

In reality I did not go to sleep before three, and at four o'clock I was already up.

To Amoy and Hong Kong

Greeted at the departure by the Commander of the “Libia”, the Consul and my friends still in evening dress, because they had not gone to sleep, I went on board, and at 6.30 I took off. There was a light wind from the north, fog and mist. The weather was calm and overcast. I set course for land, without following the coast, to do more quickly, cutting that kind of enormous convex arc which China forms with its south-eastern coasts. At some moments, however, I found myself in an unpleasant situation, because passing over the mountains, one was sailing among the clouds, in the midst of very violent whirlwinds. Fortunately, the wind was favourable, and I was able to get an average of 180 kilometres per hour.

At 11.30 I was on Amoy. I had telegraphed beforehand that supplies should be kept ready and that the place where I should disembark should be signalled with a flag. I had to make a couple of turns, for it was not easy to see the signal in the harbour crowded with steamers and boats of all kinds. At 11.35 I landed where I had been instructed, moored the aircraft at the buoy and immediately began refuelling, already ready on a tugboat. In the meantime I went on board a motorboat, where there was a merry party composed of the English Consul, the port-master and other gentlemen who had organized a picnic on the gulf, waiting for my arrival. They wanted us to stop absolutely for breakfast, but, if we had accepted, we probably would not have had time to leave for Hong Kong in order to arrive before night. After all, we had resumed the usual regimen:

eggs to drink before leaving and hard-boiled eggs on the road, washed down with an excellent bottle of Port. Thus we arrived in good condition at the evening meal, which was for us the only one of the day.

At 12.45 I was ready and left for Hong Kong. The weather was good; the wind, as I had predicted, came from the East, and therefore was favourable to me. Gradually I took altitude up to 1000 metres.

On the route between Amoy and Hong Kong I found an overwhelming number of sailing ships and junks of all kinds on the sea, even more than on the coast between Shanghai and Amoy.

After the solitude in which I had found myself in so many previous stages, I was very happy to see that animation on the sea. But this joy was tormented by a flea that they had, as they say, put in my ear, repeating to me that it was not difficult to meet in boats of pirates and marauders; and that, in the event of a forced descent, it was necessary to be cautious and on the lookout. We had a gun.

*Hong Kong.Photo: **The Industrial History of Hong Kong Group***

Meanwhile, with the wind from the East I was averaging 175 kilometres per hour, and so at 3.40 pm I arrived in Hong Kong.

I took a tour of the roadstead and landed in a boat, attracted by the indicating flag.

In the port of Hong Kong there was the Hermes, an aircraft carrier of the British Navy, which had sent a boat with a flag for my mooring, where an officer and our Consul General were staying. I certainly put my hand to the refuelling, to leave the next morning as soon as possible. We worked in this way until 6 pm, and then at last we were able to go to the city; but we had to do another hour of navigation aboard a tugboat.

In the city we met the few Italians who lived there; I couldn't go to sleep before 11 am So in two and a half days I had travelled 3600 kilometres, sleeping only six hours in total; yet I did not feel very tired, and on the other hand I had a great desire to run to take advantage of the favourable conditions of the weather.

That evening they told me during lunch that, unlike Shanghai, which was so much occupied by world public opinion, the situation was instead really delicate in Hong Kong, where there was a strong movement directed against foreigners; a somewhat worrying movement, given the large number of Chinese who are in the city, and which tended practically to boycott the commercial port, trying instead to direct and attract all trade to Canton. And indeed, in the run-up to my arrival, there had been many disasters and bankruptcies in the business environment of Hong Kong. It seems that Bolshevik emissaries sent from Russia were no strangers to this movement.

They also told me that I had risked not finding anything ready for my arrival, because the authorities had not given too much weight to the Consul's requests, believing that the date he indicated as that of my arrival was the result of excessive zeal and inexperience in aviation matters; they did not think it possible that I could come from Tokyo in two days.

The city of Victoria (Hong Kong), where we spent the night, had a very sad air with its houses covered with a dark patina, due to the strong humidity and exposure to the north wind.

In the morning, in order to be at 7 am on board my aircraft, I had to start the engine at 4 am At least that night I had been able to sleep for five hours!

When we arrived on board, an unpleasant surprise awaited us: we found, despite the night surveillance, the leading edge of the right wing broken in two places, and the canvas pierced in five different points. Imagine what would have happened if the police had not guarded the aircraft!

A boat which, drifted by the current, must have hit the wing and then under it during the night. Campanelli repaired the canvas of the right wing as best he could by means of some patches, and the leading edge by some strips of canvas as well. But this meant that I could not take off before 8.20; And so on that day I had to limit myself to doing only one stage instead of the two scheduled.

To Haiphong

Before setting course I passed over the city, which had its houses staggered on the slope of the hill with successive terraces sloping down to the sea. Being about twenty metres away on the roofs, I could see the streets, where the movement had just begun, so narrow that they seemed from above like deep furrows. The appearance of the whole was not very gay.

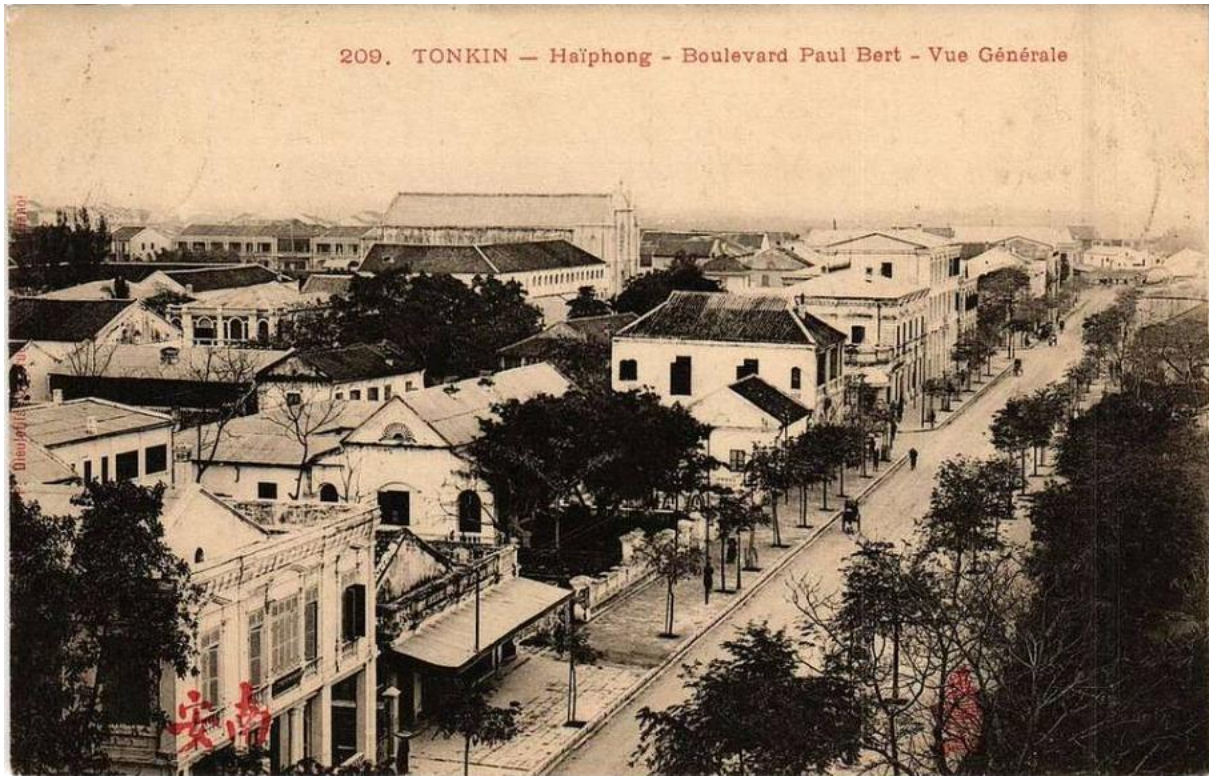
I sailed through the clouds for a while. Then a light north-easterly wind began, which swept the sky and cleared it. At 10.45 I was on the Leiciau peninsula, which I crossed

with the compass, because I did not have the relevant maps. The crossing lasted about three quarters of an hour. As I approached Haiphong, I was struck by the strange spectacle offered by the coast near Long Bay: thousands and thousands of islands, rocks, reefs and reefs capriciously scattered in the sea like dirt debris thrown from an immense crucible.

At 1 pm I alighted in Haiphong. As soon as we arrived, we turned the clock back about an hour to conform to the local time.

Now, going westwards, it was a real pleasure to gain half an hour on arrival, and sometimes an hour; This was a valuable advantage, because it increased the time available for our daylight work. On the outward route, towards the east, we had experienced at our expense how boring the opposite was!

We received many happy and cordial receptions from various personalities of Haiphong and from the French aviation officers. A rich breakfast was ready and, contrary to our custom, we sat down that time at a copiously laden table, to avenge ourselves for various forced fasts.



Haiphong (French colony) about 1925

*Indochina to India

In the afternoon that I had available in Haiphong I went to visit the Governor of Tonkin, at the residence of Hanoi, the capital, about an hour's drive away.

I was accompanied by an officer of the French Air Force, from whom I learned that air services were very developed in the region, and, very importantly, ground services were very well organized, both for seaplanes and aeroplanes, with refuelling posts, signals, meteorological services and not a few hangars.

The great abundance of waterways everywhere makes the use of seaplanes extremely easy and safe, even in the innermost regions, while heavy rains and floods often make it unsafe for land aircraft to land to land in organized camps.

We were still in the rainy season, which ends in November. It had rained the day before I arrived; it rained on that day and for the next. The predictions were just as bad.

In Hanoi I was received by the Governor, who welcomed me with the cordiality and refinement characteristic of French gentlemen; he gave me the commendation of the Green Drag one, and another decoration for Campanelli. That evening the Commander of the Air Force gathered all the aviation officers at a nice banquet, whom I had the opportunity to meet.

We discussed aeronautical issues and they talked to me about the life of the country, where it would have been interesting to be able to make a stop; but the road that awaited me was still long. The climate, especially in the summer season, was so unnerving that it prevented Europeans from doing any profitable work during the day. For a passionate hunter, that region can be a real bounty. Tigers are easily found, respected by the natives because they consider them sacred and propitious beasts; so much so that in some villages they put a sign on the fence of the fence, bearing neither more nor less than an appeal to the tigers to invite them to pay a visit to the town: so much so, for a victim or two you would have the happiness of the whole village on the other hand. Good thing tigers can't read!

The following day, the 21st, according to the forecasts, the weather was bad. Dense layers of clouds towards the south, and rain. Even the forecasts and news of the weather, from the inside, were not very good. I must note that I could choose two routes to go to Bangkok: one, almost direct, crossed the Annamitic mountain massif which runs parallel to the coast with heights varying between 1000 and 2700 metres; after rounding the massif, the route passed in sight of the Me Kong river, in an east-west direction, and then on the Me-Nam, following this river in a north-south direction until it arrived in Bangkok. Given the length of this route, I had sent a supply to Vientiane, on the Me Kong, about halfway. A second route was along the coast with stops in Tourane and Saigon, much longer but safer in all weather conditions. The first was dangerous precisely because of the buttress of the Annamite Mountains, which had to be crossed and which in general was always covered with clouds.

October 21to Tourane and Saigon

At 6 I left the moorings, which was not easy because of the wind and the current; nor was the take-off easy, the wind being across the river which was somewhat difficult.I had to describe a wide S on the step before I was in flight. I even risked at a certain moment breaking a wing against the ground. At 6.15 I was in the air.

This one went well too - I thought.

I followed the coast to Vinh, still in the rain, and from Vinh I headed inland, following the course of the river. As I progressed, the rain was getting thicker and thicker, and I was forced to sail very low so as not to lose sight of the land and follow all the bends of the river, as the clouds descended to 200, l00 and in some places up to only 50 metres above the ground.

At 8.30 I was on the watershed, at the pass called Keo Neua. The river, as I had flown up to that time, had become a miserable stream, scarcely distinguishable from above in a valley as deep and steep as a ravine. I was right on the springs, in a magnificent steep landscape; I wandered about ten minutes, hoping that the clouds would break, to help me to pass to the other side of the watershed: but in vain. The rain was increasing and the cloud masses stretched as far as the eye could see, covering under their muffled cape the black mountains covered with dense forests. I went up and down for some time in a kind of tunnel, the walls of which were formed by mountains and the ceiling by clouds. Below, dark rocks, which the rain still made pitch black, and on which the foam of the water that ran down in jumps and waterfalls could be seen just white. Towards the west the path was then barred by a curtain of fog, which seemed to mock me, saying: “It is useless for you to waste time: there is no passing through here.

Melancholy I reversed course, retraced the course of the river almost to its mouth, and continued to follow the coast southwards, not satisfied with the change of program, which considerably lengthened my route and took me to even warmer regions.

The attempt to pass through the internal route had cost me about an hour and a half of useless walking, but it was worth trying. The water followed me along the coast as far as Cape Lai. Then it ceased a little and time cleared up a little. At 11.15 I was on Tourane, smiling on a magnificent day.

We landed in the canal near the city; then we will certainly give a hand to the refuelling. The Resident and the population insisted that we stay one night in Tourane.

“Stay tonight. We have organized a ball for you”.“ You will see what beautiful girls!” You will hear what music!” You will be lodged in the Governor's house, which has magnificent beds”. Here at night we have a very sweet, delicious temperature.

I found it hard not to be moved by all that good of God that was promised to me:

the true paradise of Mohammed. I invariably limited myself to answering: “Thank you. Gladly. But I can't”‘.

It was truly unpleasant not to be able to do honour to the kind insistence of those nice people, who did not seem to have an object of distraction in the quiet monotony of the tepid days of October. I confess that I liked the place, and finally my will to refuse had weakened somewhat, being reduced to repeating only mechanically the same sentence in a slightly minor key.

I also mechanically put on my cap, said goodbye and left, resisting the temptation to stay at least one afternoon in that pleasant place.

And so it was that, almost without realising it, I found myself back in the air at 1 pm, en route to Saigon.

It was a little late to get to Saigon in daylight, and I had to ponder the possibility of gliding to a place on the coast before I was surprised by the increasing darkness; but then I decided to cut on land by the shortest route, in order to gain ground. In the last stretch I also increased the engine revs. At dusk, after a few lines of paper, I was almost in sight of Saigon; I say almost in sight, because a storm was raging over Saigon, which prevented us from distinguishing the city well; however, the lights of the streets and houses could be seen, already lit by the night that was falling. At 6 pm I was on the river, right in the centre of the city: at that moment it was raining. I made a couple of turns, a short distance from the water, on the line that seemed to me good for landing, to try to see between the reflections of the lights on, if there were no buoys or other obstacles, then I came down gradually losing altitude with a little engine, because the water was no longer distinguishable.

I landed so gently over the water and dropped anchor. Immediately afterwards a searchlight of the stationary ship of the French navy came on, and a boat came to pick us up to take us to the buoy, prepared for our mooring. All this happened in the rain, for as soon as we touched water the showers began again. I had travelled 1500 kilometres from Haiphong to Saigon that day and flown about ten and a half hours.

Having tidied up the engine and covered it with hoods to protect it from the rain, we went ashore, where the authorities offered us some Champagne.

October 33 t o Tachim (Bangkok)

The next morning the aircraft was refuelled with as much petrol as was enough to reach Bangkok and no further, as I expected that, given the very hot and muggy weather, take-off would be difficult. In fact, at 10 everything was ready, but I made two unsuccessful attempts to take off. The gasoline was always the problem, and I drained some more. Each attempt to take off cost us more than an hour's work to anchor and to recover the anchor later; this was not a really easy operation because of the strong current.

The third take-off attempt took place at 12.40, and finally succeeded. Given the advanced hour, I decided to go to Bangkok by direct route. This required a flight of more than 400 kilometres above the ground, of which 300, all in a mountainous area and covered with forests rarely trodden by human foot.

At 3 pm I was above these mountains, and I found myself between storms and strong electric shocks. I was in a not very cheerful position, also because one of the magnetos was starting to not work well, probably due to too much humidity. Below I had the tropical forests, which stretched as far as the eye could see over the peaks and valleys; To the right and left lively lightning streaked the sky and sudden lightning pierced the leaden curtain of clouds. I really passed a bad quarter of an hour. At certain moments, presuming that I could no longer go on, I almost thought of going to take refuge in the Grand Lac, which I knew to be about an hour's flight further north-east; but then I would have lost many days waiting to have supplies there to reach Bangkok.

The doubt agitated me: on the one hand, the certainty of saving the aircraft combined with that of a long delay; on the other hand, the possibility of getting lost, but also the hope of being able to pass and continue the journey quickly.

Finally, through the clouds and the rain, I could suddenly see the sharp outline of the coast. It seemed to me that I was touching the sky with my finger.

We then disposed of a leftover bottle of Port to celebrate the event. A few kilometres from the coast I found myself on the calm sea, with magnificent weather, under a very clear sky full of sunshine; In these conditions I did the last 200 kilometres of the route. I reached Tachim and I landed to the motorboat of the Minister of Italy, which was waiting for us crossing at the mouth of the river.

The main characteristic of Tachim (I realised it immediately, as soon as I stopped the engine) was that it was the meeting place of the worst mosquitoes, horseflies and midges in the world. The aircraft, while being towed by the Minister's motorboat towards the mooring place, had already been completely invaded.

On land a brief ceremony of greeting took place by the Royal Minister of Italy, the Italian Colony and the Governor of Tachim, and then, still under the horrible torture of the relentless bites of those insects, we embarked on a narrow train, with reduced speed and comfort, which took us to Bangkok.

I had landed at Tachim, a large estuary about 40 kilometres from Bangkok, because that was what I had been prescribed by the Siamese authorities. He had asked us to fly over the M Nam, in Bangkok, where it would have been easier, due to the nearby presence of the city, to refuel and any small works and checks. But I never understood why the Siamese authorities did not want my seaplane to land in Bangkok; They probably didn't know either. The only answer to the insistence of our Minister was that Tachim was the place established for the seaplane.

Probably the Siamese feared that for my landing it would be necessary to interrupt the traffic on the river or other disturbances would come; but I only needed that no one should take care of me.

In fact, although Tachim's distance from Bangkok is only 40 kilometres, it takes two hours to communicate between the two locations, since there are no roads and the only means of communication is that train on which we had embarked.

The Minister of Italy, comm. Amadori, offered me amiable hospitality in his beautiful residence.

Given the inconvenient location of Tachim, which increased the time needed for any operation, it was necessary to stop for a day for refuelling and for an engine check. And I gladly stopped, also to give in to the courteous insistence of the Italian Colony. On that day of stopover, we went to visit the temples of Bangkok. They are of a strange, characteristic architecture, all with cusps and spires, lace, reliefs and mosaics. At their gates and along their walls are arrayed horrible and grotesque monsters, so made to instil fear in the faithful. According to the religious principles of the Siamese, divinity is terrible with all men; to appease her it is necessary to pray and make sacrifices to her. We saw in a temple the famous Emerald Buddha, who was about half a meter high. To tell the truth, this Buddha did not excite me much, especially since even looked at with a binoculars (he was above an altar and very high, outside... within reach) looked more like malachite than emerald.

I visited the Siamese authorities, among whom was the Chief of Staff, a close relative of the King, who had had the happy idea of landing me at Tachim. All owned very beautiful villas, in magnificent parks and gardens; since the Sovereign, out of habit, gave villas or palaces to his favourite court dignitaries. I saw a palace still under construction, in Venetian style, rich in very rare coloured marbles, which the King had erected for one of his favourites. It was estimated that it would cost about ten million Italian lire. Given these prodigal habits, it seems that the Royal House is loaded with debts, in spite of the fat civil list.

We also went to see the famous white elephants used for 1 royal procession. White, however, they had only a kind of spot on their foreheads, tending more to dirty gray, very dirty, d1e not to white. Although royal and of the royal stables, the said elephants had been specially tamed to take the obolus of visitors with the trumpet of their trunks, and to make it fall gracefully into the pockets of their family.

From what I saw, I was able to argue that Siam was making visible efforts to assimilate Western civilisation and organize life according to the most modern laws and customs of human progress. Thus there was a sudden leap, in some fields, from a state of barbarism and almost savage abandonment, to a more modern and active life, with the adoption of the most advanced systems and discoveries of science and industry: there was no transition by intermediate stages. For example, some villages were joined by railway lines, which had sprung up before there was even thought of building a road.

Aviation was already remarkably developed, and three postal airlines were in full operation, between countries which had no other communication with each other than river rafts or almost impassable paths through the dense tropical forests.

There were already piloting schools with Siamese instructors and a workshop for the construction and repair of aircraft. The Don Muang airfield, near Bangkok, was the main air centre where the management, school and workshop were located; but I could not visit it, due to the short time available.

October 24repairs: October 27: departure to Rangoon

On the morning of the 24th, accompanied by the Minister and almost the entire Italian Colony, I went to Tachim very early on with the usual trembling and with the usual mosquito torture.

We immediately boarded our seaplane.

Many greetings and best wishes and a great waving of handkerchiefs from the ground. Two attempts to take off fail. After each attempt, a lot of time is lost to cool the engine. On the third attempt take-off I am forced to go down immediately because of a magneto that does not work. Of course, there is no longer talk of leaving: pain and disappointment! We returned to our good friends, who had accompanied us there, defying the heat and, even worse, the mosquitoes. Melancholy we brought the suitcases back to the ground.

It was one of the most painful operations of our trip, in the periods when we made a stop or two a day, that of extracting, opening, unpacking, redoing, closing and putting the suitcases back on board. After a while, the locks, due to water and rust, no longer closed, the zippers became rickety, the handles came off, and often some of our clothes ended up in the water. Once, in Australia, a pretty girl showed up on a boat just before we set sail, handing me nothing less than a shoe that had come out of one of the gutted suitcases. Often, then, some leak or infiltration of oil from the tank above produced irreparable disasters in our personal equipment.

When the thankless ceremony, so to speak, of the suitcases was completed that morning and when we had freed ourselves from our flying clothes which, although reduced, given the heat and humidity, forced us to breathe enormously, we placed ourselves around the aircraft to moor it so that it was easy to work and that we could test the engine when stationary. Fortunately, a good position could be found for the purpose.

The magnetos were dismantled and found damp and full of rust. They had probably been reduced to such conditions during the steamer journey to Tokyo.

They tried to dry them over an improvised stove, and they were then put back in place. The engine was tried and tested again without the situation improving. So, between several attempts, the whole day passed. The next morning I took the magnetos myself to Bangkok to dry them in a special stove that existed at the electric trams workshops and to check the state of insulation of the contacts with the galvanometer. As I had suspected, I was able to check by the galvanometer that two conductors of the right magneto contact holders were short-circuited from each other.

The problem was soon skilfully remedied in the same workshop, and on the evening of the next day the engine was ready again; but, due to the late hour and the tiredness (it was not really a pleasure to work under that burning and merciless sun), it was not possible to do the test on the aircraft.

Campanelli tried to work until after sunset, by means of some flying electric lamps. But these attracted so many of those insects so greedily voracious of human flesh, that it was no longer possible to do any profitable work under that martyrdom.

On the morning of the 27th, finally, the engine was tested, which was finally in order. Preparing my suitcases, I had the nice surprise of finding some vermin inside competing with some of my clothes.

At 10.30 I was on my aircraft. This time everything went well. There were no spectators, except two or three countrymen who had hitherto generously assisted us in our work, abandoning their daily occupations, anxious to see us happily take flight again. After a test ride, which satisfied me, I began to follow the course of the Me Kong, gradually increasing the altitude to 2000 metres, necessary to cross the Tenasserim mountains.

To go to Rangoon I could have descended first to the south in order to cross the Malacca Peninsula where it was narrower, while in this way it was necessary to travel about 400 kilometres above land. But the weather was good, wrinkled with a few clouds, and here and there I could follow a few streams.

At 12.30 we were on the coast of the Gulf of Martaban, near of Tavoy, our old acquaintance. It was the first port of the outward itinerary that I saw again on the return route. I lowered myself a little to greet the city, which reminded me of a hard day's work, and thought back to the long way I had travelled up to that point. We had already surpassed the 43,000 kilometres, which corresponded to the route taken by American aviators in their round-the-world trip, and so I could say that I had already broken the world record for the distance. However, I still had about 12,000 kilometres to travel to get home.

Crossing the coast, I headed straight on the compass course to Rangoon. The sea was placid and the sky clear. We took the opportunity to open our travel provisions, which consisted, as usual, of eggs and bananas. At each false departure from Tachim, our kind hosts had prepared fresh new supplies for us, for nothing lasted more than a few hours, given the fierce heatwave. On leaving, however, we had made only one small mistake: that of embarking the oldest provisions, believing them to be the freshest. I don't laugh at our disillusionment with the unpleasant scent that spread inside the aircraft when we opened the package!

I went to Rangoon at 2.35 pm going down to the seaplane base of Monkey Point, where I saw old acquaintances, including the Camp commander and the Honourary Consul of Italy: he had also been a victim of our accidents in Bangkok, which had forced him to go to the seaplane base several times, always believing that he would see us arrive at any moment.

As I expected that the telegram of my departure from Bangkok might arrive after me, before I landed I made a tour of the city, passing over the Consul's house, so that he might be notified of my arrival. And in fact he was at home and immediately ran to the seaplane. He had great pleasure in seeing me again after a long time, also because, as he confessed to me, he was not perfectly convinced that I could pass through Rangoon again.

That evening, at lunch in his house, while I was narrating my journey and praising my aircraft that had flown for so long without any important replacement, he interrupted me by saying: “Eh..well! Last time I had put my signature on the wings”. ... So have you found it?” Yes, and I apologize for my disbelief at the time”. No big deal: I hadn't even noticed”!

At Rangoon I provided myself with a good headdress at Rangoon, because it was very hot, and the rays of the sun have an evil power on the brain there: cases of sunstroke are very frequent.

In order to be able to leave early the next morning, I spent the night at the seaplane base, kindly hosted by Commander Camp.

We began with pleasure to send back to Italy the material that I had scattered here and there and that had not been used. Until then, one of my nightmares had been to move these materials from one city to another during my journey, so that I would always have them at hand in case of any eventuality. The thing was often not easy to combine, and I had to rack my brains over the schedules of the steamers to try to solve problems that were often insoluble. In recent times I had sent all the little stuff I had on the various places on the return route, and so now I came to find myself with more supplies. But time had passed and a lot of stuff had gone bad: for example, in Rangoon a propeller had been in the warehouse half eaten by white ants who had made it useless. Humidity and mould did the rest.

28 October to Akyab and Calcutta

On Wednesday, the 28th, in good weather we went on board. At 6.40 I started the engine: I had some difficulty taking off due to the oily calm of the waters and the absolute absence of wind.

Maybe the reader will have had enough of my takeoffs and landings. Imagine me! But it must be noted that these were always difficult, given the load of the aircraft, brought to the limit. When one day all the ports are provided with the little material necessary to help passing seaplanes and a good expert to direct the service, a tour like the one I have made will be a pleasure trip.

At 6.45 I broke down. I cut straight to the West-Northwest on land, and after an hour and a half, having reached the Bay of Bengal, I continued along the coast to Akyab.

Serene and placid weather. At 10.30 am, after a very peaceful navigation, I landed at Akyab in the estuary in the north of the country, to the place where I had been moored during the night, when I had come down to Australia.

Everything was ready for refuelling, which proceeded with great rapidity. I declined the invitation to breakfast which was very kindly offered to me by the Governor who had come to the place, to witness my arrival, with his yacht. A small group of ladies had taken advantage of the opportunity for a happy trip.

At 12 o'clock I was back in the air. I passed through some storms, but then on the sea I found calm, and at the compass I set course for the mouth of the Ganges. I sailed two hours on the sea without sighting either a steamer or a sailboat. At 3 pm I was on the Ganges delta, of which I flew over the countless branches at an altitude of about 1000 metres. Approaching Calcutta I found with surprise the sky invaded by an infinity of crows and hawks, which gave me no little concern, because they approached the aircraft suddenly; I had to manoeuvre two or three times to avoid them, and with all that, we almost collided with any of them. Many circled without noticing the aircraft, and when they saw it on them, they had a start: two or three rapid beats of the wing and off they went. In the houses of Calcutta, as I lowered myself to land, the hawks were even thicker: I was all eyes. At 3.40 pm, finally, I landed in my usual place, resuming the usual buoy. The usual tugboat and motorboat came and everything was ready as usual.

A bird's-eye view of Kolkata's iconic Chowringhee Road in 1925 (Oberoi Instagram post)

*Along the sacred rivers of India

29 October Departure from Calcutta

According to what I had arranged, I should have found in Calcutta all the information relating to the routes to be followed in Upper India, and the pre-established stopping points. It was interesting for me to know if I could find sufficient water and favourable conditions for the landing of the aircraft. The Consul, in agreement with the British authorities, had perfectly prepared all the material I needed, and the British Air Force Command had with the greatest courtesy arranged for the mooring buoys to be prepared in the river at Benares, Delhi and Bahawalpur as well as the signals to indicate the preferable body of water for the landing.

It had been difficult to obtain permission to stop at Bahawalpur, and this area was considered forbidden, not for military or political reasons, but out of respect for the customs of the natives, who did not like their houses to be seen from above. I hastened to assure them that I had no intention of flying over the city of Bahawalpur, especially as it was about three miles from the river, and was therefore discarded from my course.

The news I received was quite satisfactory. Only in Delhi did there seem to be a shortage of water, so it was expected that I could take-off with full load.

That evening in Calcutta we received many parties from the Italian Colony, which offered us a banquet with its dance; So we went to sleep very late, contrary to what I had wished.

October 29 to Benares

The next morning, October 29, at 4 am, we were up. At 6.30 we were on board, and at 7 the aircraft was running. The take-off was facilitated by the waves, moved by a tugboat that happened to be passing, and of which I immediately profited.

There was a lot of fog, produced by the smoke from the factories: smoke which, due to the lack of wind, remained low over the city in the morning hours. But as soon as it was far from it, the weather appeared clear and clear to me. There was only a light wind from the east. I gradually climbed to 900 metres, and had a calm navigation until almost 11 o'clock. At that hour, however, violent whirlwinds began: the wind had turned to the north-east and hindered me not a little. The course of the Ganges was rather tortuous, but I tried to economize the route, cutting as much as possible the bends of the river. There was not, as I had been led to fear, excessive current in it, and almost everywhere landing seemed possible, if not easy. Along the river there were immense cultivated fields and endless prairies. The last part of the route was more agitated because the high sun, heating the earth more, produced an imbalance in temperature and consequent vortices and whirlwinds.

At 12.45 I was over Benares. After a tour of the city, asleep by the noonday sun, I descended into the Ganges between two buoys that had been prepared for me, and moored myself to one of them.

Benares

We were received by the chief of police and an Italian friar, who was on the spot. A British officer had been sent a few days earlier by the Air Force Command, but, having delayed our arrival due to the unexpected stop in Bangkok, he had left and had not had time to return. We immediately set to work on the refuelling, surrounded by a multitude of boats crowded with onlookers, who came to see the strange machine, which for the first time landed in the sacred waters of the Ganges.

After refuelling, I went to the hotel; and, giving up the afternoon rest, I immediately set out about the city, which is one of the most interesting and picturesque in India. It is all built on the left bank of the Ganges, where the ground overhangs the water by about twenty metres.

I went to visit some temples. I saw one dedicated I don't know to which deity, on whom and in which droves of cattle, considered sacred, freely lived. Foreigners - the impure - cannot enter the interior of the temple but they are allowed to enter the portico that surrounds it and on the terrace of it. A ragtag acts as a guide and, with a small coin, provides visitors with the important fun of feeding the monkeys.

On the threshold of the temple, half-naked, filthy-looking holy men doze in the sun; and the monstrous statue of a deity strangely peeped out, composed of a jumble of limbs belonging to various animals, placed on a human torso. I don't remember what sacred beast the head was.

I visited another pagoda, also very small, but remarkable for being surmounted by a dome in gold plate, which I was told was worth about 60 million lire. The interior of the

temple was covered with coins, but not gold, but simply silver: it is evident that there was not too much confidence in the honesty of the faithful. Even here I could not enter. The deity who was worshipped there had the human body and the head of an elephant and was, as you can easily imagine, the most clumsy and most unsightly birth of a monstrous fantasy.

But if the impure were not allowed in this pagoda, a hole in the wall had been made in a small passageway, through which it was allowed, for a fee, to see the ceremonies that took place inside. Through this hole I saw the spectacle of a crowd of filthy, sweaty fanatics, who, pressing themselves on top of each other in the small space available, by the light of some stubs, poured from some metal bowls and stirred the sacred water of the Ganges into a large silver shell that was on the ground. In such a confined space there was also room for A cow, which is, for them, a divine animal. This cow was revered and caressed by all, in order to obtain special graces and the blessing of idols. Of course, as polite and revered as she was, like all cows, she had her natural needs. One can therefore imagine the fragrant cleanliness inside this pagoda. Passing in front of the door of it, I almost had a sacred horn from that cow, who, perhaps also disgusted by the spectacle and stench of the interior, went out quietly, always revered by the bystanders, slipping with her damp hooves on the marble steps of the threshold.

At the pagoda there was an atrium with a well: the famous Well of Wisdom. The impure are forbidden to enter the enclosure. The ritual requires that the faithful, eager to be enlightened, throw a coin into the well. Next to the well stands the monument of the sacred cow: a bronze cow painted red, which is forbidden to approach.

I also visited a few other pagodas: in Benares there are more than two thousand. It is certainly the city where respect for religious traditions is most observed. I was very impressed, however in seeing that religious practices are followed only by the humble classes and the ragged. The missionary who accompanied me told me that those who belong to! The educated and well-to-do classes laugh cheerfully at the various multi-armed monsters venerated in Hindu temples; for many have been educated in Europe, in the best boarding schools in England; and if some apparently follow religious tradition, it is so as not to be disinherited by their fanatical relatives.

I then went to see the destination of profane pilgrimages, namely the shops of the famous silk and brocade fabrics that come out of the factories of Benares. I admired some beautiful ones. In a warehouse I had to put my signature on an album that boasted the names of the world's best-known personalities. In the evening I visited the colonel who commanded the garrison of that city; So I went to sleep.

October 30 – over Agra to Delhi

The next morning, at 5 we were already on the bike to board. I was surprised by the great animation that reigned in the streets in that morning hour. But they all walked in one direction; in the direction of the river, since it is a local custom to perform ablutions every morning in the waters of the Ganges.

Confused in that crowd, we too went down the steps of the shore and embarked on an unsteady boat.

We were west of the city and the aircraft was towards the opposite extreme; we then descended with the favour of the current along the bank of the Ganges, under the city. My amazed gaze followed the spectacle that unfolded under the rosy light of dawn; men and women, in a fusion of colours, crowded on the steps, descending into the waters for the sacred ablutions. Some remained in mute contemplation with their arms outstretched and their palms open in the direction of the rising sun. The men were naked and the women entered the water dressed and when they came out they superimposed a dry dress on the wet one. Here and there stood piles of wood on which the dead were burned, whose ashes were then scattered and thrown into those same waters in which the living wallowed indifferently. Many collected this putrid and sacred water in the hollow of their hands, drinking it without compunction.

Our aircraft proceeded slowly, and before our astonished eyes slowly paraded, as in a fantastic dream, spires, terraces, arches, loggias, and the palaces of the maharajas, and the convents and pagodas, and a Moslem mosque that towered over everything as a challenge of Islamism to the worshippers of Brahma.

Here and there crumbling ramparts and leaning walls and fragments of colossal palaces emerged from the water below the shore. On everything, time had laid its millenary patina. Above all swarmed the multicoloured and dreamy mob of this people, living in the daze of a mystical contemplation and fearful of evil and frightening deities, which had to be appeased by continuous prayers and sacrifices.

On that morning the prayer of the Hindus was interrupted by the unusual interlude of my seaplane, which for the first time had disturbed by its anachronistic appearance the spectacle of the praying fanatics, which had been repeated every morning for centuries on the banks of the Ganges.

It took some beauty and goodness to free the aircraft from the innumerable boats of those who had made a hasty prayer to come and see how I could get up into the air. Some policemen, on a rickety motorboat, were struggling and shouting to make the boats move away and thus give me a free way to take off. But it was wasted effort, because in the space left free by two who barely moved, four or five then came from the ground were immediately pressed. I was, however, forced to set the engine in motion, as we were, and touching now one boat and now another, and manoeuvring as best I could, I was at last able to make way and set off.

I ran at low altitude along the historic thousand-year-old shore and saw all the people motionless, with their eyes turned upwards, contemplating ecstatically the civilisation passing over the sky.

The sky was clear; The journey proceeded calmly.

I kept myself at an altitude of about 1000 metres. The course of the river continued very tortuously. At Allahabad I left the Ganges and began to follow its tributary Jumma, which was to lead me to Delhi.

At about 11 am I was over Agra. I stooped down, soaring in a wide spiral around the Taji-Mahal, the majestic Indian monument erected by the Emperor Shahjahan in honour of his deceased wife, some three centuries ago.

The enormous mass, all of white marble, stands on the right bank of the Jumma, visible from tens of kilometres away. An Italian architect designed and built it. Nothing could retort the impression of calm solemnity that this candid mass demonstrates.

Flying over the other beautiful monuments of Agra, which seemed to be saying to me from below: “Come and see us: today!” I felt almost drawn to do this: I was tempted to go down. Instead... I continued.

Also on this day, about 11 o'clock, I noticed the same phenomenon as the previous day: due to the effect of the heat radiated from the earth, violent remous began at that hour, but this time, expecting them, I had increased in altitude and then continued to pull myself higher, so that I made a fairly quiet journey to Delhi.

At 12 noon I was in sight of Delhi. I took a tour of the city and landed into the river at the place pointed out to me, very narrow and rich in slums”. On the bank there were few curious people. I was received by a British officer, kindly sent by the British Air Force Command and the engineer in charge of the irrigation works, who had prepared the mooring buoys. The place was the best, given the lean Jumma, but a bit far from the city. We had to walk along the sandy riverbank to the next road. A car was rushing onto it at that moment. He stopped when he saw us, and a voice from inside asked the engineer where the dead man was.

The rumour had already spread in the city that I had fallen and died: so some natives had believed that they had seen the aircraft descend with the engine stopped and disappear under the bank of the river.

The engineer then introduced me: “This is the dead man.

A great laugh was heard from the car and one said: “I'm the doctor. and I am very happy that my trip was useless.

In the vicinity of Delhi the British have built a whole new city, which was to be the seat of the Government, the capital having recently been transferred there from Calcutta. I even knew that the installation of the Viceroy and his Government was imminent, because it was to take place on November 1st.

The new city included the Viceroy's palace, the Ministries and all the other government buildings. The houses were all white; and as they were not yet inhabited, and the streets and gardens were still incomplete, the whole thing had the appearance of a cemetery.

The transfer had been decided because Delhi is indeed the true centre of India from the point of view of communications and distances; and also because the climate of Delhi

is much more suitable for Europeans than that of Calcutta, which enjoys fame, in the summer season, to be one of the hottest cities in the world.

At least once in a while we were offered no banquets, and that evening we dined in the strictest incognito at the hotel restaurant, in the company of some lanky old ladies.

The Viceroy's Palace in Ned Delhi was nearing completion in 1925

October 31 refuel at Bahawalpur and to Karachi

On October 31st, before sunrise, we were on the river; and since the take-off was not easy due to the numerous shoals and the small space, I made a preventive reconnaissance in the boat. The thing was not easy, because the river was very thin and divided into various bends and meanders. Only a vein of water lent itself to take-off, but it was very narrow in some places.

So I unmoored the aircraft; I carried it, by means of a rowing boat, as far as possible downstream of the straight part of the river, but I ended up running aground all the same. I got out of the ground with the help of the engine, so I tried to start and unfortunately ended up again on the dry land on the riverbed, because a light breeze prevented me from steering well.

Thanks to the mud, I didn't suffer any damage. Our English friends, who had kindly come to the place to assist me, in spite of the morning hour, rushed worried. I had to stop the engine and repeat the manouevre. This time I succeeded.

I must point out here that in very narrow areas the most delicate part of take-off is to put the aircraft on the step, since before then it does not feel the effect of the commands; and very often, due to the impulse of the wind, it tends to turn around itself or to go in a direction that is not the desired one.

This first phase is the most difficult, especially when the aircraft is heavily loaded and there is little water available for manoeuvring.

Conversely, as the hull emerges from the water, it no longer floats, but slides, resting with its step on the liquid surface, almost like a skate.

In this second phase the aircraft obeys the commands, but of course tight changes cannot be made, because there is no sufficient reaction to centrifugal force on the air and water.

Sufficiently narrow approaches can be made, making the float of the inner wing crawl on the water; although this is a delicate manoeuvre, because it is easy to yaw and break a wing, on many occasions I have still had to resort to it"

I was in the air at 7.25. I passed over Delhi and headed westwards, following at first the railway line of the N.W.R., which I afterwards abandoned because it turned to the north.

This stage was a little worrisome, as I had to travel 750 kilometres on dry land, much of which was deserted, out of sight of any waterways.

Until now, navigation from Calcutta had taken place on the banks of the Ganges, first and then of the Jumma, then for 1600 kilometres. To go now to Karachi, I had to take the course of the Indus, once reached which navigation was easy and safe until arrival. It was the first time that a seaplane had made such a crossing over India. All that was to be recommended to the engine, that it was fine; and indeed it did not fail to meet our expectations.

Below me was a barren and dry soil. You could see the colossal work undertaken by the British to fertilize this immense region with a network of irrigation canals.

At about 9 am I passed over the Ghaggar Canal. Now even my few hints of vegetation seen here and there had disappeared under nothing but an immense expanse of sandy land, where the caravan tracks were scarcely traced.

The sun darted its scorching rays: not a cloud, not a slender cirrus cloud, stained the clear and serene sky. The journey was of tremendous monotony.

About 10 pm some signs of life reappeared: first a railway, then a canal, some villages, and finally the silvery ribbon of the river Sutlej, which ran soft and winding over a very large bed of sand, of which it could not wet the slightest part. I began to sail in sight of it, turning towards the south-west, and I had to suffer contrary winds and cheerful Attics.

Along the banks of the Sutlej you could see numerous canals and here and there green patches of vegetation. At 11.30 I spotted a very long bridge, which crossed the riverbed at that point about a kilometre wide: it was the Bahawalpur railway bridge. So we had arrived.

A motorboat was ready on the river and a towed boat had our supplies on board. The tanks were certainly filled with petrol, intending to proceed immediately to Karachi; but I had the unpleasant surprise of not finding the oil needed for the engine on board. The representative of Burma Oil, who should have had it in hand, declared that he knew nothing about it. This annoyed me a lot, because with that heat and dust in the streets, I had to drive to Bahawalpur, four kilometres from the river. I found more oil there, which I brought on board. But this turned out not to be good, so I was forced to go back to the city once more with Ernesto, and I was finally able to find castor oil. But between going and returning, in addition to having gathered dust and heat, I had lost a lot of time; and we could not be ready until 3 pm

The distance from Bahawalpur to Karachi is 900 kilometres, so it would have taken about six hours of flight; and since the sun set at 6 o'clock, leaving at 3 o'clock, I would arrive late at night.

Accident delay, 1 November to Karachi

Irritated as I was to have to lose a day for such a stupid accident and after having worked so hard to gain time, I decided to leave anyway, and telegraphed to Karachi that I would arrive at night.

That evening there must have been a full moon and the splashdown in Karachi did not worry me, as long as they had indicated to me with some light signal the stretch of water free of boats, in which to land without danger of collision.

The aviator officer, who was in Bahawalpur to assist me, assured me that this would be done.

I said goodbye and thanked those present, including the colonel commanding the garrison of Bahawalpur, and left.

The air was anything but calm. The sky, however, is clear. At 3.30 pm I was at the confluence of the Sutlej with the Indus, and I continued in sight of it, although sometimes I moved away from it for up to 90 kilometres to shorten the journey, its course being tortuous and irregular. The sun, as it lowered on the horizon, hurt my eyes more and more and caused me great annoyance.

We had been up since four o'clock in the morning, and the stop at Bahawalpur, with all that dust and useless coming and going, had caused me a greater strain than that of the flight from Delhi. Next to me, Campanelli, with his head resting on the edge of his fuselage, was sleeping peacefully.

That sun in the face and that heat and all those silver reflections that sprang from the water of the river put on a great drowsiness. To fight it I tried to eat something. The eggs were finished; there was only a piece of bread left, which I found very tasty.

Now sleep closed my eyes irresistibly too, and from time to time I surprised myself with the aircraft skidding to one side or off course by 40 or 50 degrees. I recovered and struggled with fatigue, changing the position on my seat as best I could and for as little as I could. At 5.15 pm I was on Sukkur, which appeared from above a pretty and cheerful city on the left bank of the Indus.

At that moment Campanelli woke up stretching his limbs. I handed him the controls and abandoned myself for half an hour to a sweet sleep, although I had half an eye open on the course.

At 6:20 pm, the red disk of the sun sent us its last ray, and disappeared to the west below the horizon, leaving a sky of fire.

It was getting dark quickly. There were still about 300 kilometres to Karachi; the drowsiness had completely vanished, and my spirit felt as awake and lucid as ever, for navigation now required the utmost attention. I was always at an altitude of a thousand metres.

Ten minutes after sunset, the file to the east appeared, red and shining in the cold, crystalline sky. The atmosphere was now more cool.

As the sun went below the horizon, he could see himself looming in the sky, on the western side, like an immeasurable cone of shadow that slowly rose: the

Night did not appear to me only as the rising of darkness, but I had the almost physical sensation of the rotation of the earth in the opposite direction of the sun, and of its enormous shadow cast in the sky. The sensation was made even more real by the stars, which began to shine, and by the presence of the moon which, in the marvellous clarity of the air, discover*ed* all the details of its surface. My mind abstracted as if I did not belong to the earth; I looked at this and the moon and the celestial bodies as in a distant scenario.

The sun and its planets moved like a huge convoy in ethereal space at thousands of miles of speed, and I felt like an atom, with my miserable 160 kilometres, in that wooden spaceship.

Meanwhile they went on along the Indus, the waters of which could scarcely be seen in the increasing darkness. Only in the direction of the moon did they stand out in a pale silver reflection.

My aircraft had neither accumulators nor electric light systems to illuminate the instruments on board. However, we had an electric pocket bulb, which gave us that necessary thread of light when needed. I also had a precious means of rescue, a small hand mirror, the same one that Campanelli used to shave, and which was now very well

used to direct the rays of the moon on the indicator dials, so that he could read them. A failure of the bulb batteries would not have caught me off guard!

At 7 pm I caught a glimpse of the lights of Hyderabad on the left. Here I had to leave the Indus, which continued southwards, flowing east of Karachi into a very large delta, and headed west-south-west over a vast grey plain of sand and mud. The moon was so behind me, and in these conditions the visibility was almost zero.

I found it very convenient to steer with the stars, lighting up the compass only from time to time to check the direction. The engine hummed with unchanging regularity, and it was a pleasure to gaze at the livid flames of the exhausts, which indicated perfect operation. Otherwise, there was little to be happy about, in the position we were in!

I suddenly glimpsed, and was able to follow, a railway line, which I immediately lost sight of. Around 8 pm I began to be a little worried because I could not see the lights of Karachi, nor any other light on earth. At last I saw shining, on the right bow, myriads of sparkling lights: Karachi! We were exactly on course!

In ten minutes I was above the city, and I made the usual wide port circuit to study the situation. The landing was not easy, because there was a fairly strong wind from the west, which in terms of terms had to force me to land in an east-west direction with the moon behind me, that is, in the worst conditions of visibility. So I decided to land with the moon on my face and the wind tailing, near a boat that was shooting Very green fires, as I had requested.

At 8.30 pm I touched water regularly. I stopped the engine and towed the boat to my usual mooring place. On that day we had travelled about 700 kilometres. It was our record for then.

In the boat came to greet us the commander of the Karachi Aerodrome, the port captain and the only Italian from Karachi, representative of Lloyd Triestino.

Despite the late hour, we certainly began to refuel with petrol and oil to be ready for departure the next day. The work was finished at about 11 pm, and at midnight we had dinner at the hotel!

We had not sat down at a dinner table for about thirty hours, and since the previous day we had taken only a few eggs. I did not feel very tired, because I was obsessed with the intention of arriving in Rome on the appointed date, in spite of the setbacks that fate had parried before me.

An engine engineer from the Lorraine factory was supposed to arrive in Karachi with some important spares. The latter had been sent, on his own initiative, by the company, and had left Paris at the beginning of October; I had left Tokyo on October 17, and had arrived in Karachi before him. But the difference was only a few hours, since the steamer on which he was traveling was expected at 11 am that same evening, October 31st.

That night we went to sleep at one o'clock. We got up at 3.30 to open, before leaving, the box of spare pieces that had arrived from Paris.

The port authorities kindly granted that the material could be unloaded from the steamer during the night and before admission for free circulation. At 2.30 am the engineer of the “Lorraine” was surprised to be awakened and invited to get off the steamer with the material that belonged to him, so that on the night of October 31st, when we went to the quay of the port shortly before dawn, Ernesto was already on the ground about to open the box.

By the light of some torches we made a good choice, but we only took a few spark plugs and a few pieces of magneto replacements.

Before leaving, a small overhaul was carried out on the engine, which had not been touched since Bangkok; not even the spark plugs had been dismantled and cleaned. This is a great credit to this engine and its manufacturers.

At 8.15 we left. Although I had had 20 hours of uninterrupted work the previous day and had only slept two and a half hours, I felt in normal condition. Only the legs were a little weak in the joints. Never mind: we had to travel seated.

November 1 to Bandar Abbas

It was the first of November; A beautiful day. This time, in order not to go down to Chahbar, of unfortunate memory, I had sent my supplies to Gwadar, which offered a safer shelter. I set course for the compass to the west, cutting through the Bay of Sunmiani, and after an hour I was along the coast of Persia. Meanwhile Ernesto was sleeping peacefully, resting from the excessive work of the previous day.

At 11.20 I was on Gwadar. Campanelli woke up that we had already landed. I lost a lot of time here, because I didn't know where the supplies were. I had to go ashore with a boat, which indeed did not have much stability, and with it I brought the gasoline back on board. Here too, no trace of oil; thank goodness I had brought a replacement tin with me on board, taught by the Bahawalpur accident!

The refuelling went on for a long time, for those good devils of the Persians brought the crates of petrol on board without the material to open them, and so I was not ready to leave until 1 pm

In the take-off an accident happened to me that could have had serious consequences. Many seagulls fluttered over the sea, and I had scarcely detached myself from the water when one of them appeared on my course. The bird remained a little undecided whether to go to the right or to the left, quacking: I came as far as I could to the right, given my very low altitude that prevented me from turning, and I barely managed to prevent the bird from hitting the propeller which would have broken irreparably when it hit; The bird passed between the upper and lower wings of the aircraft and went to hit the base of an upright where it crushed, then fell inanimate into the water. At the base of the upright there were some feathers.

The navigation from Gwadar to Banda Abbas was very placid and calm.

Few clouds and rather bad visibility. Near Jask I found a slight annoying wind from the south-east.

At 5.15 pm I was on Banda Abbas and gliding to a whaling ship moored to the buoy, prepared for me by my good friend the British Consul Mr Richardson.

He proposed that I be in Baghdad the next day and make the journey that remained to me between Baghdad and Rome in the two days; but, while refuelling, Ernesto warned me that a connection of the petrol pipe was leaking because it had split, and it needed to be changed.

The operation was quite long and I immediately understood that the arrival in Italy for the 4th had now gone up in smoke. On rough seas it was not possible to work well, and in the evening the work had to be suspended and postponed to the following day. Probably this small delay was providential. In fact, on the morning of the 2nd, a very urgent telegram arrived from the Resident of Bushire, who absolutely advised against leaving, a cyclone raging at that moment in the Persian Gulf. A new bulletin at 9 am indicated that conditions had worsened further: torrential rain, strong winds and rough seas. The first news gave wind from the North-East, the following wind from the South-West: a sign that the centre of the cyclone had passed right over Bushire. I decided to wait until noon for a new bulletin; but this gave time always threatening.

I then postponed my departure to the following day; In the meantime we took advantage of the stop to take a well-deserved rest. We received infinite care from Mr Richardson's thoughtful solicitude.

On the very evening of our arrival he had invited to a banquet the only three Europeans, among whom was a lady, who were at Banda Abbas; but Campanelli could not take part because, as soon as he returned from his work at the machine, he sat down for a moment on a chair and fell asleep so soundly that there was no way to wake him up; he was then put to bed with the help of the servants. I changed and attended the banquet, but during dinner I also fell asleep to my dismay, notwithstanding the furious efforts to stay awake. In the lucid intervals I ventured a few words, but I was often dumbfounded, realizing that I did not remember what I was saying.

On the 2nd we were therefore able to rest at our ease, and I decided to do the following day the two stages Banda Abbas-Bushire and Bushire-Baghdad, which amounted to a total of about 1600 kilometres.

November 3 to Bushire and Baghdad

Believed to be Bshire

On November 3, at 4 am, we were already up. The weather was good; the starry sky. The good Richardson accompanied us on board. Shortly before dawn, around 6 am, I was already in the air.

At 6.25 we greeted the sunrise, which promised a beautiful day. Since the route was for the west, we had the sun behind us, which made piloting more pleasant and comfortable.

It is evident that there are places on earth that have been rejected or predestined, because, in the very same roadstead where I was forced to descend on the outward route, I had to land again this time to verify a small inconvenience. A connection in the petrol line was leaking, and it had to be tightened. Having done the short work, I set off again, just as I had done about six months before, and in the same place!

The coast now turned to the northeast, for we were in the Persian Gulf. I found a fairly strong wind from the northwest, which reduced my speed to just 130 kilometres. I tried to put myself at a lower altitude, hoping to find less headwind; but to no avail. I climbed up to 500 metres. The air was shaken by violent whirlwinds. The sea was rough. We entered the area crossed the previous day by the cyclone.

At 11.40 I arrived above Bushire. From the very agitated atmosphere it could be deduced that a strong disturbance, as in fact had happened, had passed through there. I landed where I had already landed on the outward run, and found everything ready.

Believed to be at Bushire

I made the acquaintance of the English Resident, col. Prideaux whom I had not been able to see the previous time, because it was outside Bushire. He thought that I should stop at least for breakfast, and I saw baskets of provisions peeping out of a car.

But if I wanted to get to Baghdad that same evening, there was not a minute to lose. The wind was against and quite fresh and another 900 kilometres awaited me

for the landing. I telegraphed that they would have a searchlight ready just in case.

Having refuelled, I took leave of my kind guests and embarked in haste.

I got very wet, due to the rough sea, while I was manoeuvring to take off, and at 12.30 I was back in the air, heading on 300°, which corresponded to the course to Basra.

Throughout the Persian Gulf the wind was quite fresh and exactly against the course. Passing on the island of Kharag I checked that the average speed was very low, just 125 kilometres.

A landing at night in Baghdad did not suit me too much, although I had asked for a searchlight, both because of the lack of moonlight, and because the Tigris must have been low, and it was therefore difficult in the darkness to choose the most suitable area to descend.

But when I reached the coast at the bottom of the Persian Gulf, I noticed that the wind was visibly diminishing, and I regained hope.

At 2.40 pm I was at Basra, and passed over the immense expanse of oil depots, and in sight of the river port, full of traffic and animation. From here the route followed the

course of the Tigris. But now, just to get there before schedule, since even a few minutes gained might be decisive, I cut through the desert and the vast swamps that lay between the Tigris and Euphrates, not far from Basra. I set course for this area on the compass, since I had no point of reference.

In the beginning immense clouds of black smoke were seen here and there rising to the sky: they were the treasury produced by oil fires. The region appeared to be very rich in precious combustibles, for marshes and black lakes could be seen, where the oil floated on the water. At the end of two and a half hours' navigation on the squalid and marshy plain, I met the course of the Tigris again at about Kutel-Amara, and began to follow the river, cutting straight ahead, so as to make the course as quickly as possible.

At 5.30 pm the sun set. So that day I saw the double spectacle of sunrise and sunset in flight. There were still 40 kilometres to go. I increased the engine rpm by increasing the speed of the aircraft, to which I seemed to have communicated my impatience.

The air was darkening rapidly, while below me the ground was flowing quickly. A few more minutes and we will be here. The light became more and more scarce. I saw that the river was thin and more than ever it was necessary to arrive with even a single glimmer of light, but enough to recognize the slums. I could already distinguish the lighted lights of Baghdad.

At 5.50 pm I was finally above the place, where I had last moored the aircraft. From the ground they fired some Very green fires. I wasted no time, I made a half turn and the aircraft landed on the water between the two banks of the Tigris. It was almost night.

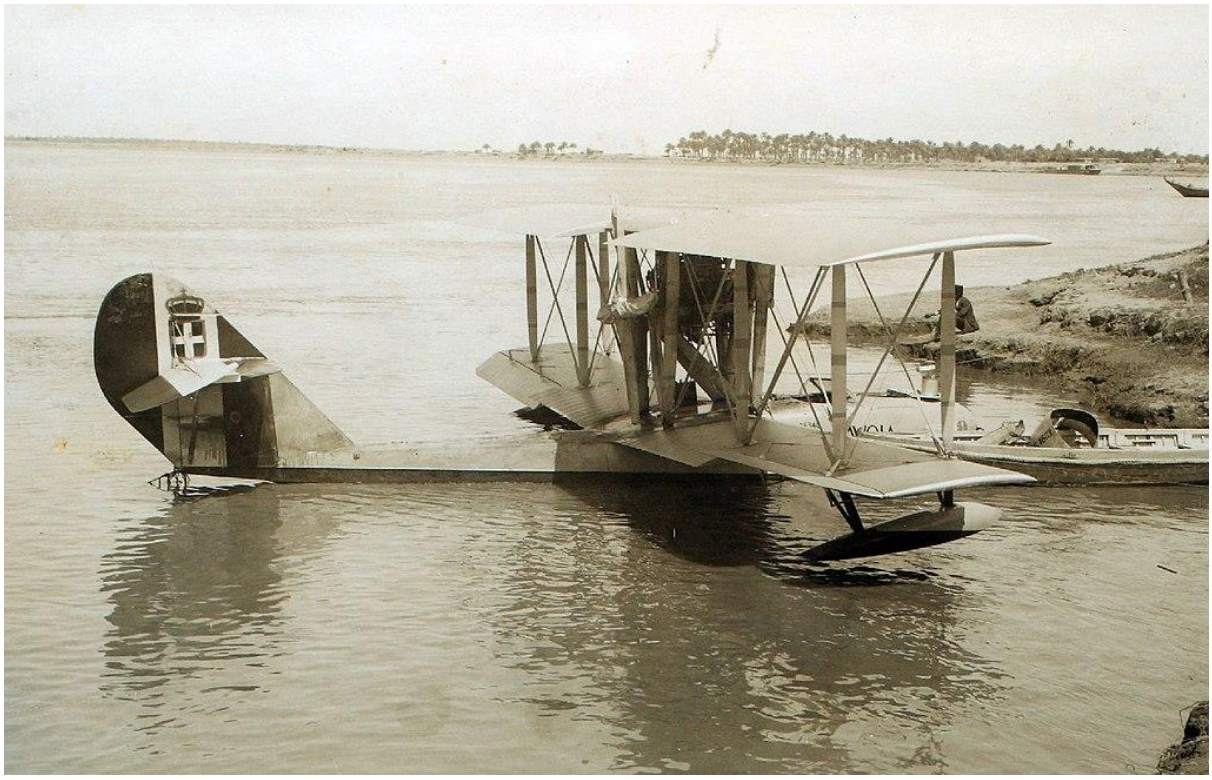


Photo from San Diego Air and Space Museum's Library and Archives

If I had arrived a few minutes later, landing would have been very difficult in that part of the river, since, due to the low water, there were frequent sandbanks at the water's edge or emerging ones, which I could not have distinguished; and on the other hand I could not know them, because on the outward journey the river was almost in flood and the water level much higher.

From the motorboat that came to assist me, I had myself towed along the riverbed, as the previous time, in order to be able to refuel more quickly. As soon as I arrived near land, a boat came to meet me, where I saw a gentleman with a large flowing black beard, whom I believed to be a missionary. He was instead the new Italian Consul recently appointed. The British helped to refuel despite the late hour, illuminating by means of a searchlight. In this way it was also possible to prepare the engine for the next day's departure. The work ended at 9 pm; Then we went to the city, where this time we were able to take lodging in a hotel, which had been built during our absence. How much progress has been made in the space of a few months: a new consul and a new hotel!

In Baghdad I really felt as if I were at home, because by now even accidents and breakdowns would not have compromised our arrival or at least would have delayed it by only a few days; while in some areas of Persia or India a small breakdown could have delayed our trip by weeks and perhaps months.

November 4 to Alessandretta.

On November 4, at 6 am, I was already on board the aircraft. As a precaution, I took on board a little more gasoline, so that the load was almost complete. because the weather reports of the English airmen announced a contrary wind from the north.

I had 900 kilometres of road to do, the last 200 of which between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean in the middle of the mainland, and I did not want to find myself short of fuel on the latter.

The engine was looked at more carefully than usual, and a few spark plugs were replaced. since it was now useless to economize our reserves, and probably we would not have had time to see the engine again until we arrived in Italy.

The commander of the Baghdad airfield came courteously to greet me and took a great interest in my departure manouevre. And as there were several sailing ships in the river that got in my way, I had myself towed to a place to the south, where I had free water.

I went ashore again during the manoeuvre because of the lean, but by now my hull had become accustomed to it, and besides, as long as it was sand, it did not matter at all.

At 9.20 I started the engine. Despite my concern about the full load, this time the take-off was successful quite quickly and very well. This was due to the shallow depth of the water, which is very favourable for the first phase of the manouevre. I had also noticed the same in Delhi. The phenomenon occurs due to the reaction of the bottom, which

increases the resistance of the water to the advancement of the hull, and therefore produces a vertical component of greater strength.

I left the Tigris at once, and after about twenty minutes I was already on the Euphrates. of which I began to follow the very tortuous course at a distance, cutting straight as far as I could.

As I went on, the wind decreased in intensity. After some time I was able to check that I was keeping a fairly good average speed. At first I kept to an altitude of 500 metres, which I then increased to 1000 when I saw that the sun was beginning to burn more and the temperature to rise, and this in order to save myself useless manoeuvres against the whirlwinds.

At 12:20 pm I was in Deir el-Zor, where I saw the hangars of the French airfield. Here I found the air very perturbed by the fairly strong wind from the North-East: at certain times I was forced to proceed with a drift angle of almost 40°.

At 1:40 pm I left the course of the Euphrates and headed for Aleppo, at the compass. I gradually increased the altitude to 1500 metres. The sky was clear and the weather was calm. At 2.15 pm I passed above Aleppo, an old acquaintance.

And here in the distance are the Syriac mountains, beyond which I would at last see the Mediterranean again. At an altitude of 1700 metres I passed on the hill of Bailan.

At 2.55 pm I was gliding to Alessandretta. There was an Italian steamer in the port, with the Pavese on shore because it was the anniversary of the Victory.

I went floating to the usual mooring place on the beach, where there was not a living soul, because it was expected that I would arrive late. But shortly afterwards my good friends from Alexandretta came running breathless, and the captain of the steamer that was in the roadstead also came. He told me that he was very anxious to see my arrival, but that, not expecting me so soon, he had also gone to rest: he had been up all night for the sake of navigation. Awakened by the roar of my engine, he had put on a jacket and run on deck, but by that time I had already moored in the harbor. Now he marvelled at my quickness". "Dear commander," I said to him, "but we do three kilometres a minute!"

In Alexandretta I had to decide whether to follow the route of the Aegean and Greece, or the route along the North Coast of Africa. But from the examination of the maps of North Africa, which they had sent me there, I immediately realised that Benghazi was a very unsuitable port for landing, because it was completely open, and I would have exposed myself, in case of bad weather, to the risk of not being able to leave. Alexandretta's weather reports were good, but I didn't know what the weather was like in Benghazi and Tripoli. On the other hand, I had excellent bulletins about the weather conditions between Leros and Taranto. I therefore did not want to trade the certain for the uncertain, and I decided on the Northern route.

That afternoon I went to visit the French Resident, whom I saw again with great pleasure, and attended a small reception at the International Circle. I planned to leave

in the night, so as to arrive in Naples around sunset, if the supply to Leros and Taranto was done quickly, as I had planned.

I was pleasantly hosted by the Reverend Fathers of the Catholic Mission, with whom I dined, recalling episodes of my journey.

November 5 to Leros and Taranto

At 10 am I went to sleep to be woken up at 2 am But due to various small mishaps we could not be on board, and unmoored before 3.30.

The light was very scarce, because the moon was waning and a slight haze was diffused over the earth and over the calm and silent equalities.

The city was fast asleep. The boats were also dozing, motionless at anchor in the harbor. Only two souls anxious to see their homeland again did not have nor did they give peace to the few patients who assisted them.

The overpowering roar of the engine, whose echo reverberated in the dark mountains of Syria, broke the calm of that autumn night. At 3.40 I was in the air.

The moon was still very high and reflected on the sea in a cold silver reflection. I set course for Cape Anamur, leaving the coast of Asia Minor on the right.

I sailed like this for about two and a half hours in the grey and cold haze of the night: below, the immense leaden expanse of the sea, above, the starry sky in the milky glow of the lunar glare; on the horizon the grey mist, which hid the border between the water and the sky.

At 5.30 I sighted a dark mass on the right; it was the coast of Asia Minor: it was Cape Anamur, whose splendid lighthouse threw its vivid light at intervals.

That black, heavy mass of the earth had an aspect almost of mystery, and seemed to me nearer than it really was.

To steer well in the course I used the stars, changing the reference star about every half hour, to take into account the celestial rotation. At 6 o'clock dawn began, and at 6.20 behind us the sun rose, overlooking a magnificent day of serenity and calm.

At 6.53 I was on Cape Khelidonia. The Anatolian coast on that wonderful morning was enchanting. I passed on Castello Rizzo still all asleep: the village on the edge of a small inlet" with the houses reflected in the waters, seemed the image of peace, and made me feel nostalgic for a few days of rest, without the breathless agitation of our daily departures.

At 9 am I landed to Leros, to Porto Laki, at our seaplane base. It was the first land we touched, on which the Italian flag flew. It almost seemed like a dream to me. The various authorities gave me great feasts, welcoming me with affectionate sympathy.

Supplies were immediately set in motion. but this went on for a long time, since the tanks were almost empty; and so, with the delay that came at the departure, I saw the trip to Naples vanish in the same afternoon.

As soon as I was ready, I had myself towed to a convenient position, and around 11 am I was in the air. I immediately headed for the Corinth Canal. A slight north-easterly wind hindered me a little.

At 1:10 pm I was over Corinth, where I found the usual very strong whirlwinds, which are a specialty of this isthmus. I must say, however, that I was at a very low altitude. At the height of Patras I threw myself on Epirus, following about the same course as I had taken on the outward journey, and increasing in altitude to round the mountain ranges.

At 3.15 pm I was on the Ionian Sea, and I headed directly for Santa Maria di Leuca. I sharpened my gaze to recognize my homeland. Several other times I had landed on Otranto, and I knew that at a distance it appeared as a strip of land very low on the sea. A little mist and a few layers of clouds made a curtain to the view; but to the

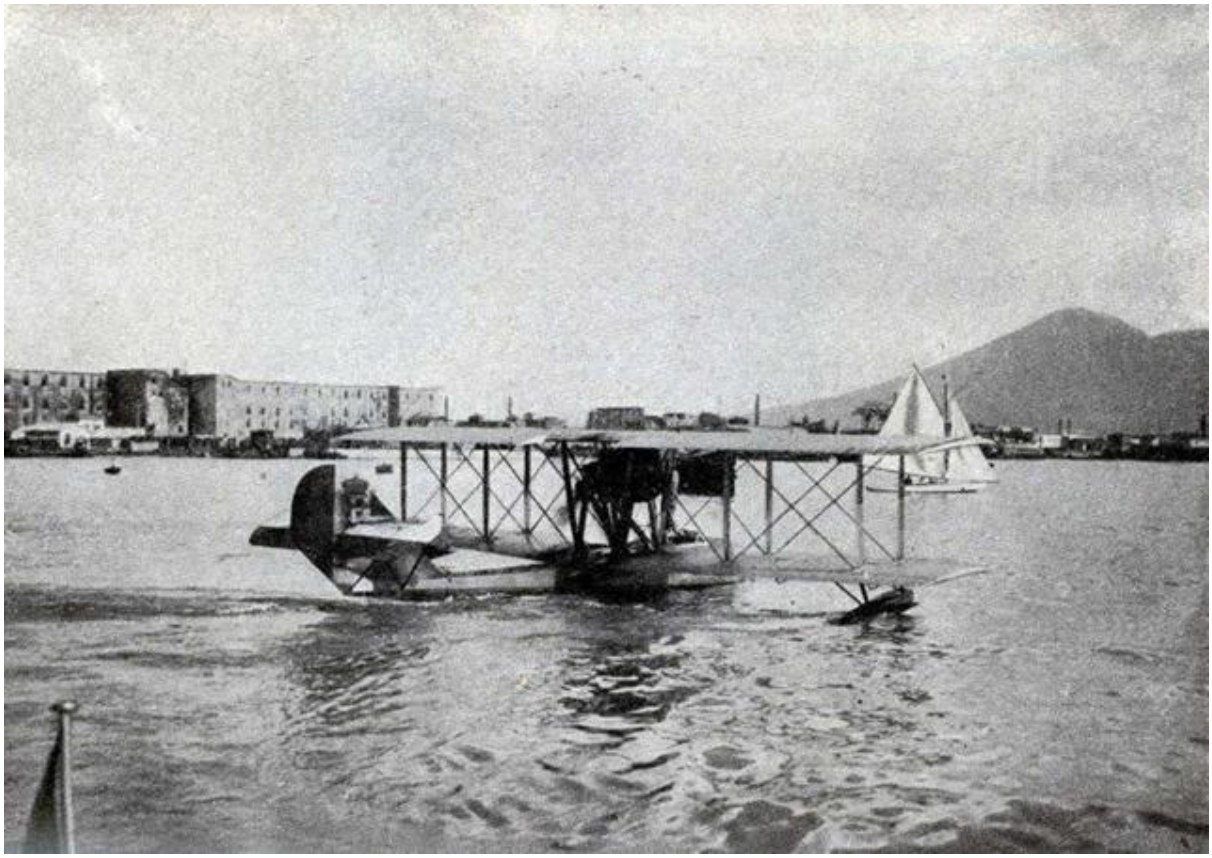
15.45 a thin line appeared to me distinctly among the clouds on the horizon: it was Capo d'Otranto!

At 4.13 pm precisely, I passed above the Apulian coast at Tricase. I was in Italy!

At 5 pm on my watch, which corresponded to 4 pm in Italy, I soared in the sky of Taranto, and after a tour on the Grand Canal, where the great multitude crowded, I landed 3 in front of the seaplane base. That day I had flown for about twelve hours and completed 1800 kilometres: eighteen days earlier we had left Japanese soil. The only discomfort I felt from the long flight was a decrease in auditory acuity, which persisted for two or three hours after getting off the aircraft; I was therefore not in a position to hear the various greetings, which were pleasantly addressed to me as soon as I went down to earth.

Arriving in Taranto, I had an idea of the interest with which my flight had been followed in Italy and which I had ignored in my distant wanderings. Everyone asked me if I was tired. Although in the last two days I had travelled from Banda Abbas to Taranto about 4400 kilometres, flying thirty hours and working all the rest of the time, if you take away eight hours of sleep in all, frankly and without hesitation I could say that I was not tired. And neither was Campanelli. Maybe it was habit, maybe it was the near goal that doubled our energy.

November 6 to Naples



The next day at 7.50 I left Taranto. I passed Calabria in good weather at an altitude of 2000 metres. The Tyrrhenian Sea, however, treated us badly. At 9.45 am a black hurricane came up from the sirocco, and I found myself wandering for a long time in the middle of it in the south of the Sorrento Peninsula, without the possibility of seeing land and therefore being able to pass to the other side.

I began to make a zigzag course with the direction facing west, between the land and the open sea, until I saw in a pass of the Sorrento Peninsula a short passage between the clouds: I do not believe that there was more than twenty metres of space between them and the land. I slipped in the middle of it, brushing against the trees and often being sucked towards the ground by violent vortices. I flew over two or three houses, at a short distance, but I was finally over the Gulf of Naples. At10.25 I was gliding into the port of Naples!

On the ground, in the rain, HRH the Duchess of Aosta was watching Genariello's arrival in his homeland.

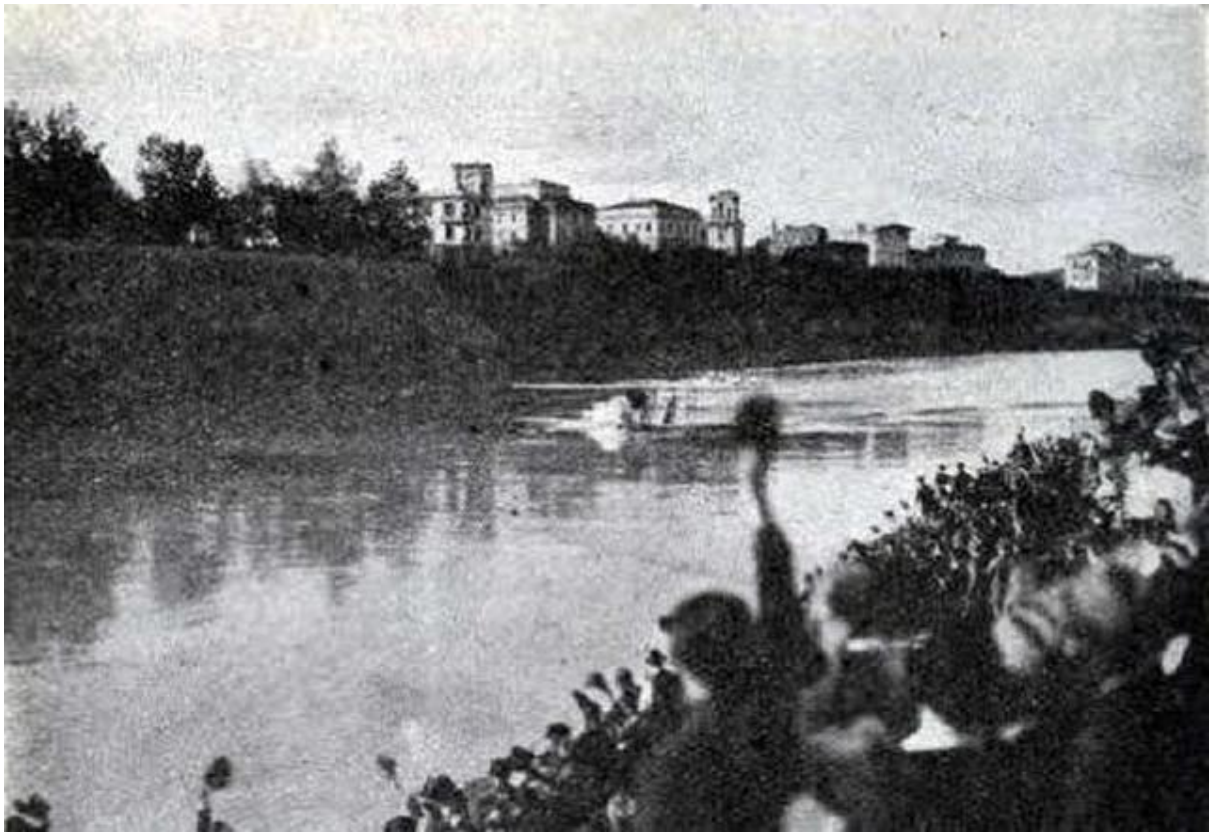
From Rome they phoned me to postpone the arrival until the next day, since due to bad weather, it was not advisable to land between the Ponte del Risorgimento and the Ponte Margherita, where I intended to get off.

Finale: November 7 at Rome

The following day, Saturday, November 7, at 3 pm, Gennariello alighted on the Tiber, at Ponte Ripetta, acclaimed by a huge multitude that crowded on the bridges and parapets as on the stairs of an ancient Roman circus.

My 55,000-kilometre cruise was over.

Prime Minister Mussolini wanted to embrace me in the name of Italy, in that sacred name that had given me faith and the will to win.



Enormous crowds greeted the airmen at Ponte Ripetta, and the landing stage is known as Scalo de Pinedo.

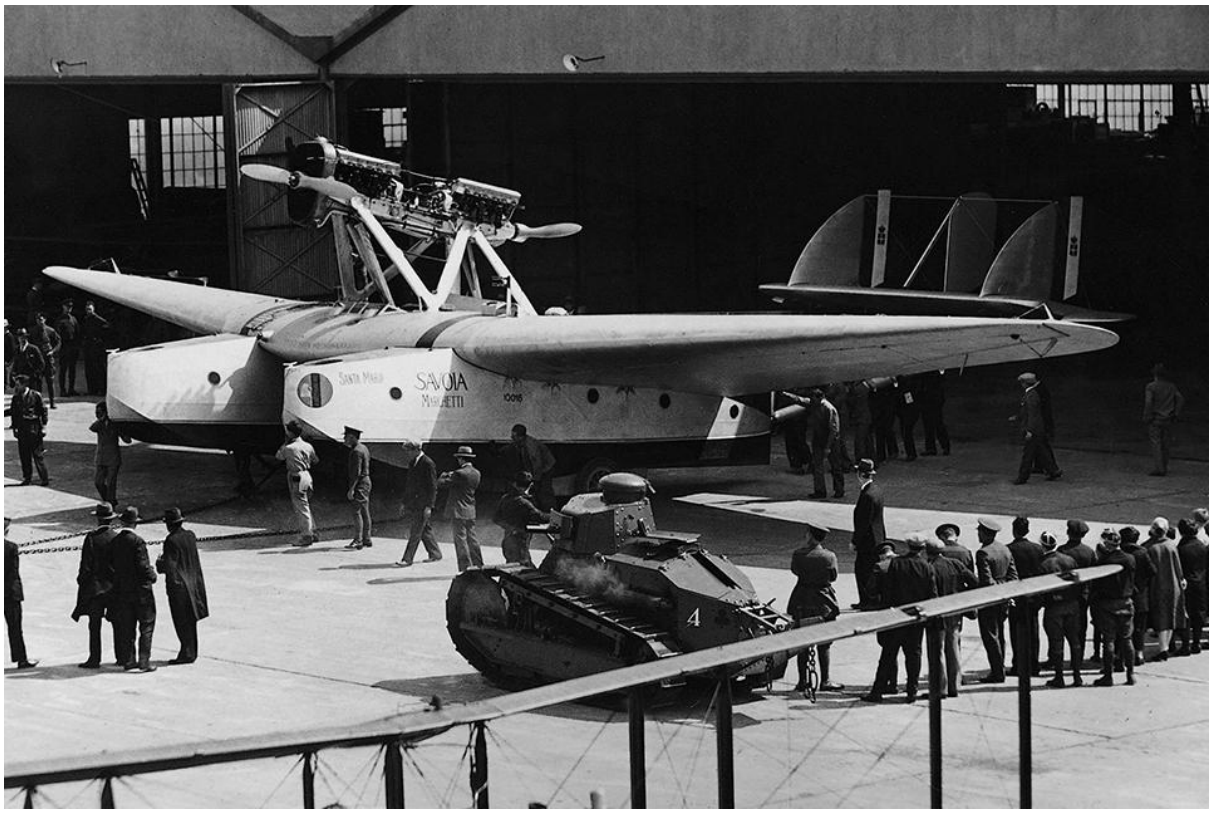
The later story of De Pinedo

1927-1933

(*This article originally appeared in the September 2020 issue of* Aviation History. Citation information: Derek O'Connor (2/23/2025) **Lord of the Distances Francesco de Pinedo**. HistoryNet Retrieved from https://www.historynet.com/lord-of-the-distances-francesco-)

De Pinedo's next venture, enthusiastically supported by Mussolini and the new air minister, Italo Balbo, was a double crossing of the Atlantic Ocean, beginning in the South Atlantic and returning by a northerly route. For this de Pinedo selected the unorthodox but proven Savoia-Marchetti S.55 catamaran flying boat, powered by two Isotta-Fraschini engines mounted in tandem above the cantilever wing. Accompanying him were copilot Captain Carlo Del Prete, an experienced long-distance flier, and mechanic Lieutenant Vitale Zacchetti. Their S.55 was named *Santa Maria* in honor of Christopher Columbus.

Leaving Italy on February 8, 1927, *Santa Maria* flew by stages down the West African coast before heading out across the southern Atlantic from the Cape Verde Islands on February 20. Bad weather forced them down after 1,500 miles off the Brazilian island of Fernando de Noronha. They reached Rio de Janeiro six days later and Buenos Aires on March 2. There the airmen were feted while the S.55's engines were changed in preparation for the long flight northward across South America.



Santa Maria II was a replacement for the S.55 that had been destroyed by fire in Arizona. (Sueddeutsche Zeitung Photo)

Departing Buenos Aires on March 14 and lacking adequate maps, *Santa Maria*'s crew navigated mainly by dead reckoning and overnighted at river refueling stops. They crossed the Caribbean via Guyana and Cuba, arriving in New Orleans on March 29.

Heading west, *Santa Maria* alighted near Roosevelt Dam, in Arizona, on April 5. During refuelling, a cigarette butt tossed into the water by a careless spectator ignited residual gasoline on the surface. De Pinedo watched in horror from the shore as *Santa Maria* was consumed by the flames and his two companions leapt overboard and swam for their lives.

Air Minister Balbo immediately ordered a substitute S.55 shipped to New York, and the U.S. Army Air Corps flew de Pinedo and his crew there. When *Santa Maria II* arrived in early May, the punctilious de Pinedo returned to New Orleans to restart the flight. The Italians then headed north to Chicago, Montreal, Quebec and Trepassy, Newfoundland, from where, on May 30, they set off across the North Atlantic for the Azores.

Strong headwinds caused *Santa Maria II* to run out of fuel and force-land in the ocean 200 miles short of the Azores. Taken in tow by passing ships, the crew spent three uncomfortable days on board before they reached Horta. Resuming the flight on June 10, the ever-scrupulous de Pinedo backtracked to their ditching position before setting course for Lisbon, Barcelona and finally Rome. They arrived to an ecstatic welcome on June 16, having covered roughly 26,000 miles in the two *Santa Marias*.

A delighted Mussolini promoted de Pinedo to general and named him "Lord of the Distances." Balbo soon invited him to lead the first of his justly celebrated "air cruises" by massed formations of flying boats around the Mediterranean.

Not long after, de Pinedo's star began to fade. Having fallen out with Balbo, he resigned from the air force in early 1933. September 3 found him at Floyd Bennett Field in New York, nattily dressed in a business suit, bow tie and derby hat, as above.. After making a short speech de Pinedo clambered into the cockpit of his specially modified Bellanca J-3-500 monoplane *Santa Lucia*, intent on setting a new distance record by flying solo 6,000 miles nonstop to Baghdad.

Minutes later de Pinedo was dead, engulfed in flames when the Bellanca, with more than 1,000 gallons of fuel on board, swerved and crashed during takeoff. The Lord of the Distances had made his last flight.

A video of the fatal crash can be found online,

Later legacy

Francesco's memory is probably best preserved by *ITAer de Pinedo,* a technical college in Rome that specialises in aviation technology, general logistics and transport.

There are about 800 students,

The 1927 flight to America made a huge impression, and in 2002 Chicago, St Louis, Michigan and other centres celebrated the 75th anniversary of the visit:

CHICAGO'S FASCINATION WITH ITALIAN AVIATORS IS DEEPLY ROOTED *and, once*

again, we honour ***the man who, 75 years ago, was met by squadrons of American military planes*** *from Chanute and the Great Lakes Naval Centre, lined up in honour guard formation to escort his Santa Maria directly to Chicago's lakefront. A din of horns, bells, sirens, and whistles from the surrounding boats rose up with the cheers of thousands of Chicagoans as a Coast Guard tender pulled the plane in for mooring at the Chicago Yacht Club. The aviators stepped on shore and were literally mobbed by the city's Italians, who surged forward to greet them with embraces, kisses, and hearty slaps on the back. That afternoon, Pinedo heard Mass at Holy Name cathedral, and afterwards paid a visit to Cardinal Mundelein, who eloquently praised the flyer for his achievements. During a banquet that evening at the Palmer House, he concluded his speech by humorously noting that the absence of alcohol obliged him to postpone the pleasure of properly toasting Chicago. Within a very*

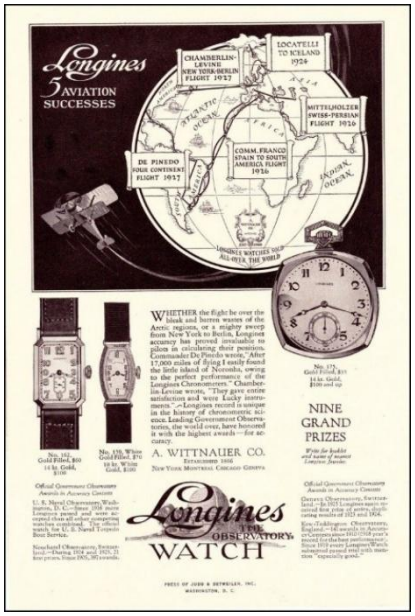
short time he would be back in Italy, and there, he pledged, he would lift a glass to the city.

St Louis was the home of Charles Lindbergh, and there is a claim that de Pinedo's feat was ‘Lindbergh's final inspiration to make his historic trip two months after de Pinedo’s landing in the United States’.

The celebrations were quite considerable, as described on https://www.italiausa.com/pride/index.htm .

The Italian air force has big plans to celebrate de Pinedo’s career in 2000, but Covid caused most events to be cancelled.

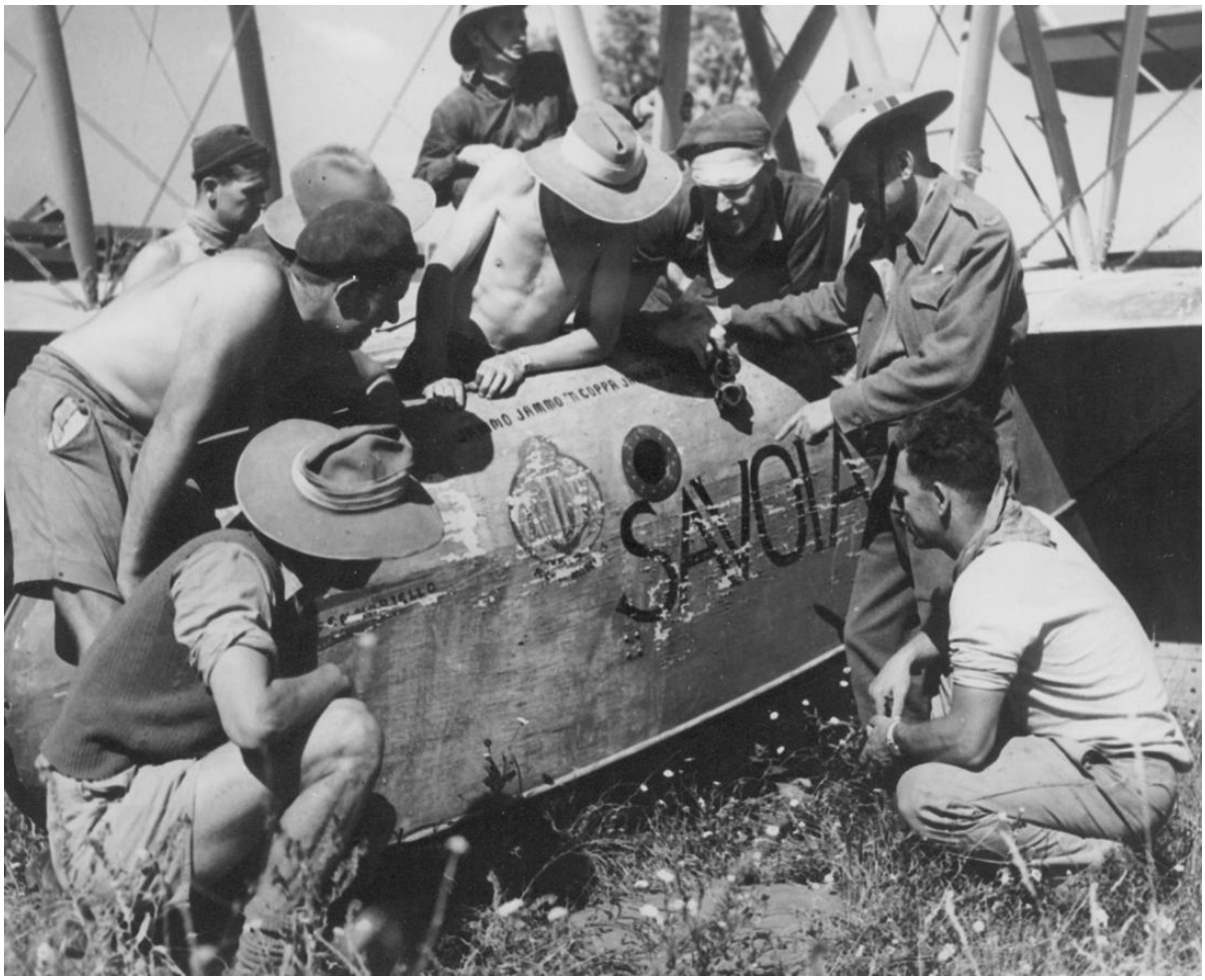
In 2003, to celebrate de Pinedo and also the hundredth anniversary of the formation of the *Regia Aeronautica*, a group of Italian Air Force Academy staff and cadet members visited the RAAF; they are seen here enjoying an air display at Williamtown RAAF base/



As well as the philatelic items described on page 217ff, there were cigarette cards and other souvenirs.

The most expensive ‘souvenirs’ are Longines de Pinedo Pilot Majetek special edition watches: if you are lucky you may be able to buy one for around €7.000.

Epilogue: the Savoia, 1943



The original caption for these photographs, taken by Laurence Le Guay, Australian war photographer: *Ground crew members of No. 3 Squadron RAAF, made an interesting find at Guidonia, Italy, when they arrived at an airfield near Rome. The SIAI S.16 amphibian (sic) aircraft which they were examining, had an RAAF badge emblazoned on its fuselage and the inscription "Pt. Cook" beneath it. Their amazement was complete until an Italian explained that the SIAI had been flown out to Australia in 1925 by Italian pilot Di* (sic) *Pinedo*. Unfortunately, there is no later record of this aircraft.

Appendix 1: De Pinedo philately

The item on the left has an interesting story: From the US website for Cherrystone Auctions:

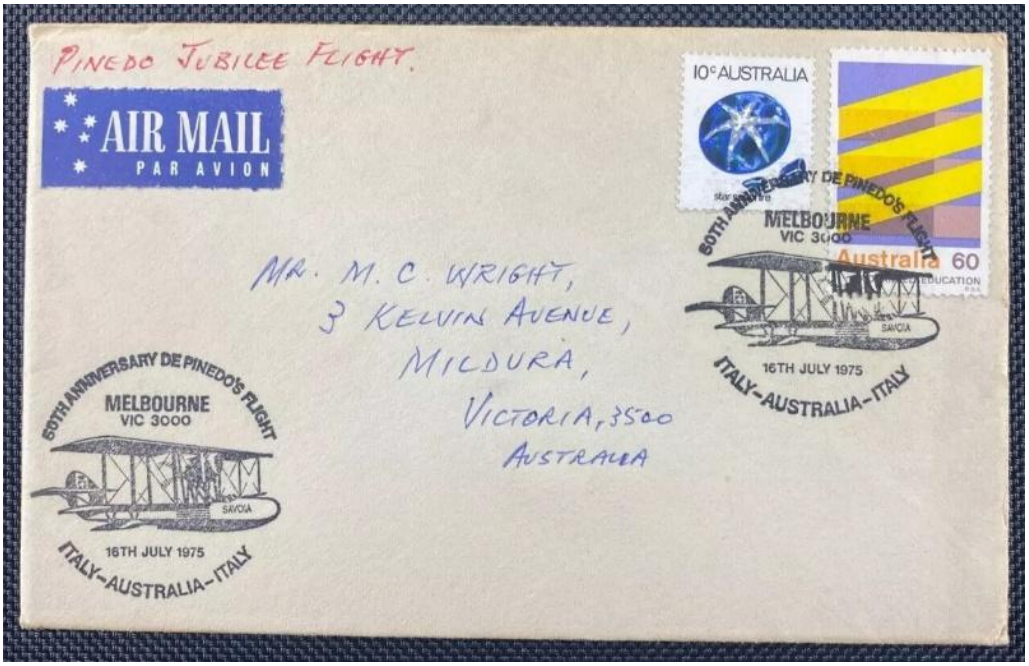
Lot #967 ***ITALY Flight Covers***
1925 de Pinedo World Flight, Calcutta to Melbourne, franked with 1/2a and 1 1/2a India King George V definitives, with a red handstamp reading "Italian Consul General's (Melbourne) letter of 12-11-25. / No. 750/11. / Calcutta to Melbourne by Seaplane, 13/5/1925.".

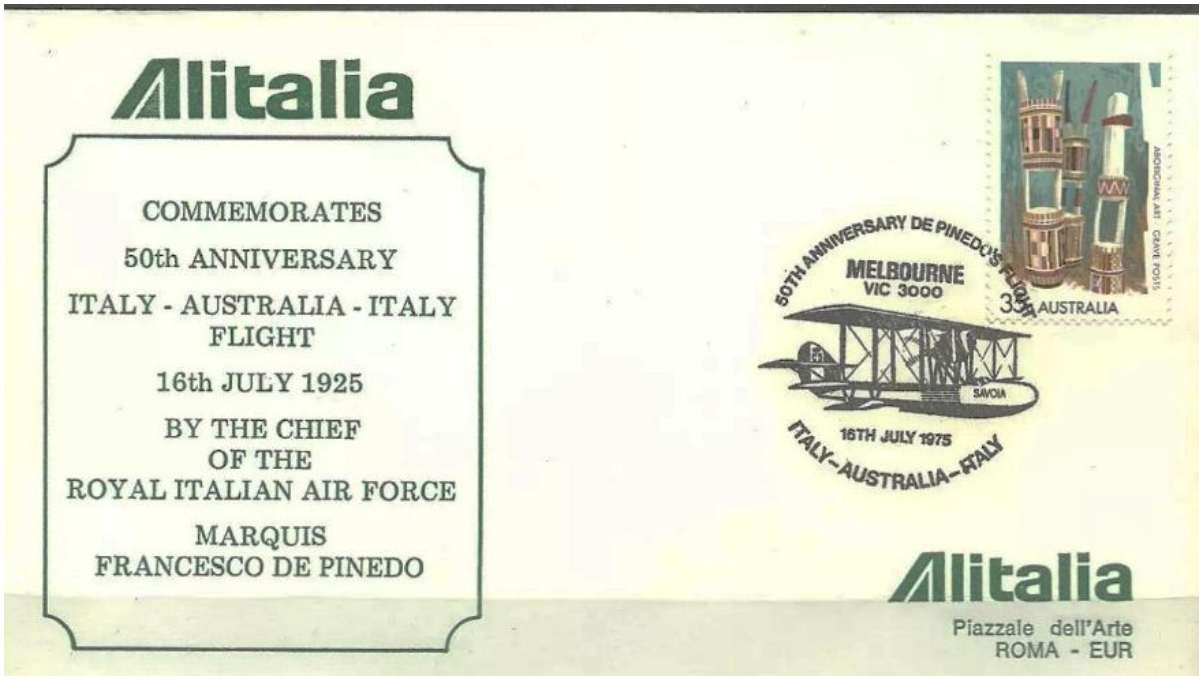
It is signed by Stephen Smith and the president of the Aero Philatelic Club of India H.A. Outhwaite (these, apparently to prevent duplication).

This is the right half of the cover only, as the 93 existing covers had all been intentionally cut in half, as they had been signed by de Pinedo after a promised charity donation had failed (the half with his signature is missing).

This one is numbered 77 (out of 93), and is in very fine condition. It sold in October 2024 for $USD 900. Another of these was sold in Australia in 2024 by Millenium Auctions for $AUD1500. In 2014, possibly the same item was sold by Leski Auctions for $AUD900.

More affordable: There are many 50th anniversary 'covers' available for around $AUD10.





Alitalia produced a souvenir envelope available at a similar price

Other countries produced celebratory issues for the 50th anniversary – the postage stamp on the left is from Monaco.

Many other items are available on eBay and specialist stamp collector sites. So far there are no plans for celebratory issues for the centenary of the 1925 flight.

From his later exploits, there is an amazing philatelic product This stamp is among the rarest "Canadian" and air post stamps, with this example being one of the finest known.

Only 300 of the stamps were ever printed, with around 33 mint examples known to have made it through to the present day .The overprint denotes that the stamps were intended for letters to be flown by Francesco de Pinedo, the famed Italian aviator. It features wide margins with a clean, well-centred impression and despite some light hinging is in extremely fine condition.

This Newfoundland stamp overprinted for his transatlantic flight sold for $USD45,000 on January 31, 2014.

A block of 4 of these stamps is on offer at over €100,000, the exact price to be negotiated. Forgeries of this stamp sell for around $USD70.

Appendix 2: A reaction to de Pinedo's Australian visit

An article in the Perth *Truth* of Saturday 11 July 1925, was scathing, and as well as being jingoistic, was also full of factual errors. *Truth* is typically anything but the truth! But the article is accurate in that the Savoia was indeed a better machine than the Fairey IIID.

Mussolini's Lieutenant, Marchese di Pinedo, Chief of Italian Air Force, Has Open Sesame to Australia's Strategic Points-Flies Over Them All and Inspects and Estimates Them at Leisure.-Welcome Guest at Point Cook—His Laugh and Information t :—

"TRUTH" ASSUMES THE ROLE OF A TACTLESS PATRIOT, AND ASKS WHY ?

WHAT HAS BROUGHT THE MARCHESE Dl PINEDO TO AUSTRALIA? IF ANY "TACTLESS" PATRIOT WERE TO ASK THAT QUESTION OF THE ITALIAN AVIATOR AT ONE OF THE NUMEROUS FESTJVITIES WITH WHICH AUSTRALIA IS ENTERTAINING HIM, THERE WOULD PROBABLY BE A HOWL OF ANQUISH AND INDIGNATION. BUT IT IS TIME SOMEBODY ASKED, HAVING REGARD TO THE COMPARATIVE CERTAINTY THAT WHEN LABOR ASSUMES THE FEDERAL REIGNS OP POWER IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND PROCEEDS TO CHECK THE ITALIANISING OF AUSTRALIA, DICTATOR MUSSOLINI WILL HAVE {SOMETHING TO SAY, AND THAT "SAY" MAY LEAD TO THE NASTIEST OF COMPLICATIONS.

The article compares Pinedo with 'Machiavelli, ... the Medicis, the Borgias, the Cammora and the Black Hand'. 'For years Italians have been pouring into this country, until they now form a substantial section of the community. In Queensland they virtually control the sugar industry, to the exclusion of Australians. In the cities, they, and kindred races, have precipitated the worst unemployment crisis in our history. Long ago this paper exclaimed against the foreigners and pointed warningly to the time when they would be established in sufficient numbers to constitute a political menace. But the Bruce-Page Government, with characteristic indolence and lack of foresight, faced the prospect of a polyglot Australia complacently, and left the first shot to be fired by the industrial unions, who did not commence their bombardment until the unemployed problem reached an acute stage.

There was fear of the local Italian language newspaper and even of a nefarious alliance 'between Italy and the Japs'. The 'fossilised' Bruce-Page Government should 'set about regulating the entry into the Commonwealth of people who were ready to show their fangs at the first voice of criticism, and if need be let the East cut our throats'.

There were special fears in Queensland, with 'riot after riot, illicit stilling, and a state of lawlessness interspersed with bloodshed, bomb outrages and a state of local anarchy.' The 'wop' was taking over: 'in some districts the entire population was Italian. and that

the English tongue and English schools had disappeared, together with white labour and white landowners'. The Trades Unions were unsuccessful in getting the situation changed, A levy of £40 a head was placed on immigrants from the Mediterranean, but the sweepings of the Levant regarded this regulation as a joke, and found it an easy matter to raise a ten-minute loan to circumvent the vigilance officers of the Customs Department. The Poll Tax checked the inrush of Greeks about as effectively as a boy with a' shanghai would have checked the charge of the Light Brigade'.

The next move was the departure of the Marchese Dl Pinedo, and this was seen as a spying mission: 'the flying boat would survey populated e coastal areas taking in every naval base, every harbour, every capital and every point of strategic importance'. A landplane route would not do this.

The Government even gave the Italians the free run of the Point Cook Aerodrome and compared to other countries our security was lax. Not that it mattered much: the article referred to a 'comic opera' status of our defence forces. 'The crowning glory of the lot are the marine exhibits; Farley seaplanes with Rolls-Eagle engines. Their right place is in some country shire hall, with souvenirs of the war.

Driven by engines of approximately the same horsepower as Pinedo's machine, they have a broken-winded range of 200 miles or so against the Savoia's 800. They use more fuel and have a speed of some 80 mph against the Savoia's 146 mph The Italians can climb to 12,000 feet (or more), while the Faireys groan in agony if they reach 6,000 feet.

With a certain degree of manoeuvre, passable visibility, and reasonable delicacy of control, '

Pinedo's machine is immeasurably superior from every angle to any of the dull, heavy, sky hooks in which our pilots are compelled to risk life and limb .To sum up, the Australian Air Force is a joke and a mockery, and does not contain one effective machine of a 1925 war footing.

For the money which Bruce is spending on the two new cruisers that are being built in the land from which he gets his spats, and his affectation, it would be possible to commission the Australian Air Force on an effective Active Service footing. Such equipment would put heart into the officers and provide a more effective and logical defence for this Continent than a flotilla of destroyers and the rest of our ragtime navy multiplied by ten.

Appendix 3: Academic research on the de Pinedo flight.

Lee and Kennedy

Christopher Lee and Claire Kennedy published a paper entitled *Race, technological modernity, and the Italo-Australian condition: Francesco De Pinedo's 1925 flight from Europe to Australia* in 2020, online at https://research-repository.griffith.edu.au .

This is an AI-generated summary:

> The document analyses Francesco De Pinedo's 1925 flight from Europe to Australia, exploring its implications for Italian modernity, fascist ideals, and the reception of Italian aviation in a global context.
>
> **The Role of Aviation in Fascist Ideals**
>
> The article examines the intersection of aviation and fascism in Italy, particularly through the lens of Francesco De Pinedo's 1925 flight from Rome to Australia. It highlights how De Pinedo's achievements were utilized by Mussolini to promote fascist ideals, despite De Pinedo's own more liberal and cosmopolitan views on modernity.
>
> - Francesco De Pinedo's flights contributed to the promotion of fascist modernity in Italy.
> - Mussolini celebrated De Pinedo as a model modern Italian citizen.
> - De Pinedo's 1925 flight to Australia was less focused on fascist propaganda compared to his 1927 flight to the Americas.
> - The association of Italian aviation with fascism has overshadowed the significance of the 1925 flight in scholarly discussions.
>
> **De Pinedo's Personal Account and Observations**
>
> The article analyses De Pinedo's personal reflections on his flight and his observations of Australian modernity. It contrasts his views with the fascist narrative, suggesting a more nuanced understanding of modern citizenship.
>
> - De Pinedo's diary reveals his interest in Australian modernity and its implications for citizenship.
> - His perspective aligns more with liberal values than with fascist ideology.
> - The flight provided De Pinedo with a geographical imagination that embraced international exchanges of progressive ideas.
>
> **Australian Reception of Italian Modernity**
>
> The article discusses the Australian response to De Pinedo's achievements, reflecting the broader anxieties of a British Australia regarding its identity in a globalising world. It highlights the challenges faced by the Italian diaspora in Australia during this period.

- The tightening of North American immigration policies led to increased Italian migration to Australia post-Great War.
- Debates about Italian migration influenced Australian immigration policy and public perception.
- De Pinedo's reception was shaped by contemporary discussions about the benefits of a more cosmopolitan modernity.
- Italian Australians sought to demonstrate the positive contributions of their community to an anxious, white, British Australia.

Fascist Ideology and Aviation in Italy

The Fascist regime in Italy promoted aviation as a symbol of national progress and modernity, linking it to the revival of Italy's historical prominence. Mussolini's government utilized aviation achievements to foster national pride and connect with the Italian diaspora, particularly through transatlantic flights led by figures like Francesco De Pinedo.

- Aviation was seen as a sign of national progress and modernity.
- Mussolini claimed aviation achievements would restore Italy's preeminence akin to Imperial Rome.
- Italo Balbo's transatlantic flights aimed to engage the Italian diaspora as supporters of fascism.
- Francesco De Pinedo's flights in the 1920s laid the groundwork for later fascist aviation spectacles.

De Pinedo's Transnational Flight Achievements

Francesco De Pinedo's pioneering flights in the 1920s showcased the potential of aviation for transnational travel and aimed to counter anti-fascist sentiments. His 1927 flight from Europe to the Americas was celebrated by Mussolini as a demonstration of Italian vitality and a means to connect with the Italian diaspora.

- De Pinedo's 1927 flight was a strategic response to anti-fascist protests.
- The flight was praised by Mussolini as a demonstration of the vitality of the Italian race.
- De Pinedo's journey included significant stops in North Africa and the Americas.
- His achievements were part of a broader fascist narrative promoting Italian aviation.

The Role of Aviation in Fascist Identity

Aviation was central to the Fascist vision of a modern Italian identity, emphasizing qualities like discipline, energy, and daring. Mussolini's government

invested heavily in aviation to cultivate a new citizenry that embodied these ideals.

- Mussolini established a central aviation authority and increased funding for aviation.
- The regime aimed to create a disciplined and energetic Italian citizenry through aviation.
- Aviation was portrayed as a means of asserting Italy's modernity and military prowess.
- Mussolini's speeches linked aviation to the creation of a new way of life for Italians.

De Pinedo's Observations of Australia

During his 1925 visit to Australia, De Pinedo noted the country's modernity and the potential contributions of Italian migrants. His reflections highlighted the contrasts between Australian society and Italian perceptions of race and class.

- De Pinedo arrived in Australia on 31 May 1925, completing a significant transnational flight.
- He observed that Australians were generally against immigration from non-white populations.
- De Pinedo praised Australia's modernity, education levels, and social conditions for women.
- He recognized the potential for Italian migrants to contribute positively to Australian society.

Reception of De Pinedo in Australia

De Pinedo was warmly welcomed in Australia, where his achievements were celebrated as a connection between Italy and its diaspora. However, underlying racial prejudices influenced the reception of Italians in Australia.

- De Pinedo was celebrated by Australian officials and the Italian community.
- His flight was seen as a significant achievement for Italy, being the first from outside the British Empire.
- The Australian media compared his achievements to prior British flights, emphasizing British contributions.
- Racial attitudes complicated the perception of Italian migrants, often viewing them as inferior.

Racial Dynamics and Labour Issues

De Pinedo's visit coincided with tensions surrounding Italian labour in Australia, particularly in the sugar industry. His presence was used to counter anti-Italian sentiment and promote the contributions of Italians to Australian society.

- The visit occurred during a period of racial tension regarding Italian workers in the sugar industry.
- Archbishop Duhig supported Italians emphasizing their industriousness and contributions.
- The Royal Commission found northern Italians to be reliable workers, but acknowledged racial distinctions.
- De Pinedo's flight was seen as a means to elevate the status of Italians in Australia.

Conclusion: De Pinedo's Legacy

De Pinedo's achievements and observations during his flight to Australia reflect a complex interplay of national pride, racial dynamics, and modernity. His legacy is characterized by a more liberal and cosmopolitan view of identity, contrasting with the fascist narrative promoted by Mussolini.

- De Pinedo's flight symbolized a connection between Italy and its diaspora.
- His reflections offered a more nuanced view of modernity and race than the fascist ideology.
- The aviator's legacy is marked by a blend of pride in Italian heritage and a recognition of multicultural contributions.
- His experiences in Australia highlighted the potential for harmony amidst racial tensions.

Alberto Cauli

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Here is the abstract:

The year 2020 marked the 95th anniversary of Francesco De Pinedo and Ernesto Campanelli's record-breaking flight of 55,000 km, from Italy to Australia, Japan and back, in a seaplane named *Gennariello*. Their achievement was lauded worldwide, especially in Australia, where the press reported on it intensively. This paper reconstructs the story of the flight by analysing the Australian press accounts and De Pinedo's diary, to understand how the Australian public perceived the event. It investigates the aviators' arrival in Perth, Adelaide and Melbourne, where their popularity was greatest and where the local Italian communities enthusiastically welcomed them. The analysis shows that the flight engendered increased public interest and paid dividends in terms of image for the commercial companies involved, while fascism exploited it to display its progress in aviation. The paper concludes by exploring the legacy of the endeavour in modern Italy and Australia, emphasising the differences between the countries.

Appendix 4: From *55,000 km*: the aircraft

SEAPLANE EQUIPMENT CHARACTERISTICS: THE AIRCRAFT AND ITS CONSTRUCTION

The S. 16 Ter aircraft, intended for the Rome-Melbourne-Tokyo-Rome cruise, was not expressly built in anticipation of this test, but was taken from the supply material of the squadrons of the RAI

It belonged to a group of about I50 similar seaplanes, Savoia-Marchetti 1925, built in the Savoia shipyards of the Società Idrovolanti Alta Italia (SIAI), in Sesto Calende.

The aircraft was therefore strictly military series. On it was mounted the Lorraine 450 HP engine, and all the practical adaptations and all those interior arrangements that the great voyage recommended.

The S. 16 Ter seaplane is entirely built of wood.

This characteristic could have given at least theoretical concerns in the preventive study of the trip, for the climate that was going to be crossed.

But already in previous missions I had been able to form a concept of the quality of construction of Savoy aircraft, which, even in mass production, were carried out with the most vigilant care, and according to the most advanced technique.

In these wooden constructions, SIAI has specialized in the processes with which it treats wood in aviation constructions, in order to protect it against atmospheric agents and against the deterioration of prolonged immersion.

Briefly, these are soaking and enamelling with special anti-putrid and elastic mixtures based on tar, bitumen and gutta-percha in various proportions and consistencies.

The wood treated in this way becomes absolutely impermeable and resistant to atmospheric agents, and retains these qualities for an indefinite time.

These processes had already been tested before my trip, but in this one their effectiveness was truly extraordinary.

In a six-month cruise in which the aircraft remained at anchor like a yacht, often tossed by storms, crawling at speed over unsuspected shallows, there were never worries about dripping due to water infiltration into the hull.

If we consider that most of the journey took place under heat waves of over 50' centigrade in the sun, and that for months the aircraft flew the whole day in this dazzling atmosphere, if we consider that in the evening. After such roasting days, the temperature fell so abruptly that the humidity of the condensed and covered every part of the aircraft with a veil of water, one can evaluate the extraordinary challenge that all this constituted for the wooden structure of it, and one can get an idea of the degree of perfection that can be achieved today by the technique of wooden constructions.

In addition to the characteristic SIA! treatment of the material, mentioned above, the S. 16 Ter seaplane has the advantage of a successful fusion of connections and connections resulting in a monolithic, perfectly harmonious structural continuity

and complete that does not give rise to the localization of those occult processes of deterioration with which the irreparable ruin of an aircraft begins.

For obvious reasons, known to all those in charge, a new machine always lacks that homogeneity of resistance to use, which is a necessary condition for triumphing in the exceptional tests of practical use.

The S. 16 Ter, in its not very modern architecture, betrays the descent from an initial project that is now five years old.

But five years of refinements guided by the experience of use, and carried out with very modern means have made it a complete, harmonious, special machine.

Apart from all this, the construction of the S. 16 Ter makes use of the materials most commonly used in similar aviation constructions. The cell is entirely made of Silver Spruce wood treated with the well-known blends.

The hull is made of plywood in three layers of top quality birch glued to casein, 4 mm thick. on the sides, 5 on the bottoms, 3 above deck.

The part subject to immersion consists of a triple planking, formed from the inside to the outside of the following overlapping layers:

I) A layer of 5 mm birch plywood.
2) A canvas impregnated with gutta-percha-tar mastic.
3) A layer of diagonal strips in cedar wood: thickness mm. 4.
4) A canvas soaked in gutta-percha-tar.
5) A layer of longitudinal strips of cedar a few millimetres thick.
These layers are sewn together strongly by a very close copper nail.

On finish, the filling surface is covered with a very dense putty-putty of the usual composition.

The wood of the emerged part is treated with a first coat of greasy putty, then with two coats of glossy enamel paint.

The hardware is enamelled with black paint at 200° fire.

The propeller, which was never changed during the entire voyage and which at the end of it showed no trace of deformation, was a four-bladed monobloc in seasoned walnut, prepared according to the technique of the SIA! Establishments.

The aircraft was on the road for a total of 201 days, of which 123 days in the water and in the open air, under temperatures ranging between 0° and 40° centigrade in the shade, and a total of 49 days in the rain. It was able to have hospitalization in a hangar for 78 days.

The hull has not suffered any deformation or deterioration, as could be seen on arrival.

THE CELL

On the leading edge of the wing, the canvas has been reinforced; The seams are all double, and numerous added seams ensure a better connection between the canvas and the ribs.

The watertightness of the wings has been meticulously taken care of.

In correspondence with the attachments of the struts with the spars, small leather hoods filled with grease were placed and fixed in a watertight manner to the surface of the wing and tightly closed around the pipes of the struts.

Above these there are then the normal semi-watertight aluminum defenses or fairings.

All lathes and other parts subject to oxidation have been protected with cloth or leather sheaths filled with grease.

In the places where it was difficult to obtain the complete watertightness of the wings, protections with glued canvas and paint were applied to be removed in case of disassembly of the wing.

In consideration of the torrid and humid climate to which the aircraft would have been subjected in most of the journey, the painting of the wings was the subject of special care, knowing well the difficulties encountered by other aviators in previous flights in the torrid area. So the canvases were soaked largely in “Titanine rossa” tensioning paint. opaque to ultraviolet rays, and on the external surface they were painted with a mirror varnish with nitro paint composed “silver Titans”.

This treatment gave excellent results. At the end of the voyage the upper wings were still new. The lower right wing was changed in Tokyo, because it had deteriorated due to numerous boat investments. The lower left wing, although patched, served very well until the end of the voyage.

THE COMMANDS

The control cables were mounted on large diameter ball boxes to minimize friction; guide pulleys were added, to absolutely avoid even the slightest rubbing of the cables against the internal elements of the wing or hull; and at each return pulley, large celluloid windows, hermetically watertight, were made in the canvas for immediate inspection.

The control cables were mounted in such a way that they could be replaced without disassembling the wings, removing them after joining the new cable to one end of the old cable.

The double control was installed, so that the pilot could have a certain freedom of movement if necessary, handing over the manoueuvre to the engineman.

The manouevre of the aircraft, following the particular care adopted, was very light.

THE ENGINE CASTLE

The engine receiver, already designed for the arrangement of the Fiat A. 12 bis engine, was the only part of the aircraft to which significant modifications had been made, in order to be able to accommodate the Lorraine 450 HP engine.

This engine has cylinders arranged in three rows as a W, and to allow the passage of the ! In the heads of the groups of side cylinders, the diagonal pillars, which connect the upper central plane to the engine receiver, had to be abolished.

The function of these diagonals, however, was carried over to the pairs of immediately adjacent struts, which connect the upper central plane with the hull.

These uprights were suitably strengthened; and their diagonals, made of steel cable, were replaced with two steel profiles, because otherwise the elastic displacements of the central plane would perhaps have been too strong, due to the greater length of the current diagonals compared to those eliminated. The sleepers of the motore castle were replaced with new walnut sleepers, massive and very robust, in anticipation of possible engine vibrations, which however did not occur at all.

In addition, the depth of the upper central plane, on the side of the trailing edge, had to be further reduced to leave the propeller free to turn, because the Lorraine 450 HP engine has a shorter shaft length than that of the Fiat A. 12 bis engine.

SEAFARING EQUIPMENT

The seaplane, although intended to sail in the air, must nevertheless depart from the sea and descend there at the end of its flight. It may happen that, for unforeseeable reasons, the seaplane is forced to go down to the open sea and remain there for a long time in bad weather conditions.

The seafaring equipment has therefore been singularly cared for in all its details, since, as navigators know, even a small deficiency can have serious consequences.

a) Arrangement for towing and mooring.

In normal seaplanes, there is no suitable accommodation for towing the aircraft offshore. If necessary, when it is necessary to improvise a makeshift arrangement, the tow cable must be fixed to the uprights of the engine receiver, and then started, by means of restraints, on the bow. In such conditions, the aircraft, during towing, tends to submerge the bow, takes on water, and does not have the necessary course stability. Similar problems occur when the aircraft has to be anchored in the open and rough sea.

In the aircraft set up for the voyage, the skeleton of the bow of the hull was reinforced internally, by means of two steel tips arranged in a V shape and in correspondence with these, under the keel, a sturdy eyebolt was applied, to be used both for towing and for mooring the aircraft at anchor. Since, when the aircraft is in the water, this eyebolt is below the waterline, a tow and mooring cable equipped with an elastic system to

cushion the tears due to the sea, was permanently guarded and suitably fixed on the outside of the hull along the right side.

To anchor the aircraft, a 15 kg anchor, admiralty type, was placed on board, with about 1O metres of chain and 50 metres of special line specially manufactured in the Corderia of Castellammare di Stabia.

b) Accommodation for sailing.

Although the engine had an exceptional operating safety, it was also to be expected that the aircraft would be obliged to go to sea for any reason whatsoever and at a time when it was far from the coast or from ships that could lend it assistance, since no escort of any kind was provided, nor any support ship.

It was therefore necessary to put the aircraft in a position to reach the coast even in such an unfortunate circumstance.

One system that could have been used and which seemed excellent at first sight was to bring to the aircraft an auxiliary motor of the outboard type, similar to those used by common boats, preparing the necessary accommodations for the moment of use.

Apart from the significant weight, 25-30 kg., of such a motor, its help could be quite effective in conditions of absolute calm sea and wind; but certainly not as soon as these two elements began to agitate.

Experience teaches that normal type boats, with engines of 15-20 HP (see some motorboats of the Royal Navy) are sometimes unable to sail with wind and sea in the bow or in otherwise unfavourable conditions.

In much worse conditions would have found a seaplane that has very bad nautical qualities and offers with its airframe Tina a huge grip to the wind. That's why I thought of solving the problem with the sail which has the property of increasing its effectiveness in parallel with the strength of the wind.

The aircraft, under the action of the wind, tends to arrange itself with the bow in the direction of it, due to the effect of the tail empennages and due to the greater immersion at the bow. This tendency had to be corrected by shifting the centre of wind pressure towards the bow. Numerous experiments were carried out, and the sail arrangement was reduced to the simple use of a jib at the end of the bow. Fittings were built in duralumin and so was the rudder, whose shape was very similar to that of a cutter rudder.

The rudder was placed laterally to the hull, as far as possible towards the stern; and in order for the rudder to function effectively, both as a rudder and as a keel, it was provided that it should always be on the leeward side, and for this reason it could be placed indifferently on both the starboard and port sides of the hull.

The rudder, in order that it could also function well as a keelboard, was of considerable size and was largely compensated, so that it would not result in too great a force on the tiller.

In this way, the centre of the shape of the submerged part was moved towards the stern, and the sail centre towards the bow in order to reduce the luffing tendency of the seaplane.

All the sail arrangement could be assembled and disassembled completely in a few minutes and stored in special containers in the tail. The jib shaft was made of two removable pieces and was also braced with steel cables. The experiments carried out showed that the aircraft sailed very well in crosswinds, even in unfavourable sea conditions, and could also further tighten the wind in calm sea conditions. In this way, the aircraft acquired complete freedom of movement and the possibility of manoeuvring safely in a sector of over 180°.

It was thus possible to head safely towards a land included in that sector and choose the landing point appropriately in order to avoid breakdowns, counter-cliffs, etc.

c) Ship's reserves.

If, due to an engine failure, far from the coast and with calm winds, the aircraft was forced to stay at sea for a long time, without being able to receive rescue, the crew could resort to a box of reserve food and a small distiller for drinking water for their sustenance.

The box of reserve food sufficient for about a week contained: Concentrated broth - gr. 300, Canned meat - gr. 1500 Jam - gr. I000 Fruit in alcohol - gr. 500 Biscuit - gr. 1000, Cognac - gr. 1200, with a total weight of 8 kg., including packaging in a hermetically sealed box.

The distiller was of the laboratory type with a tin-plated copper cauldron and a nickel-plated brass coil. It was planned that it had to be mounted on the bow of the aircraft, with a particularly designed arrangement to eliminate the danger of fire and ensure the stability of the complex even in rough seas.

The circulation of water for cooling the coil was obtained by means of a siphon. This small distiller weighs about 8 kg. it worked by means of a “Primus” petrol lamp. and could provide a glass of distilled water every five minutes.

Fishing equipment made it possible to come to the aid of the limited supply of food.

The distiller's own cauldron could be uncovered and used as a cooking vessel.

The seafaring equipment was completed by anchor lights for staying overnight in port, navigation lights, a Very pistol for signals, a megaphone, a boathook, etc.

ON-BOARD INSTRUMENTS

All the wheat for complete engine control and normal navigational instruments were placed on the aircraft as follows:

- Engine tachometer. Oil pressure gauge.
- Petrol pressure gauge (A. M. pumps). Aero thermometer for radiator water.

- Oil aero thermometer, applied to the oil outlet pipe from the engine. Petrol level indicator in the tanks.
- Speed indicator (Venturi type). Inclinometer.
- Skidding.
- Altimeter.
- Compass Aèra, with graphometer. Ludolph compass.
- Two watches.
- Clinoaccelerometer.
- All instruments were radionized. (luminous paint on indicators?)

The oil aero thermometer has been applied to the oil outlet pipe from the engine, so as to always have the exact indication of the oil temperature at the exit of the circulation and to be instantly warned, by variations of the circulation, of the slightest irregularities in the operation of the engine.

There were two compasses: one of the Ludolph type, placed in the bow below in front of the pilot, as far as possible from the movable iron masses and illuminated by a porthole made in the hull; the other, of the Aera type, was placed immediately behind the windshield, between the pilot and the engineman, and could also be used to take measurements and establish the position of the aircraft.

The Ludolph compass gave excellent results throughout the trip, while the other was discarded for its instability and bad behaviour under vibrations.

The fuel level gauge had flexible remote transmission. After about three stages, this broke down and was no longer useful throughout the journey.

ON-BOARD ANCILLARY ACCOMMODATIONS

A small LCA cinema camera and a panoramic camera were placed on the aircraft. The cinematographic arrangement was designed so that the pilot could easily assemble, disassemble and operate the machine during flight.

After the first four stages, the cinema set broke down. It was repaired. It broke down again and was no longer needed.

The photographic material was largely lost due to humidity, intense heat and the difficulty of arranging everything in a protected position, given the limited space available on board.

To lessen the physical strain to be endured for a long pilotage, all precautions were taken to alleviate the fatigue of flight.

The aircraft was perfectly balanced so that no pressure was required on the controls in the flight line. And so he maintained throughout the journey.

The backrest and seat were carefully padded and covered in leather.

In front of the two pedal sets, transversely to the hull, a large leather strap was suspended, on which the pilot or engineman, in turn, could stretch his legs to stretch them during the rest periods in the long hours of flight.

A “thermos” with refreshing drinks was placed under the seat, within easy reach of the crew.

The British Air Ministry kindly provided two special helmets, very light, internally ventilated and painted between two layers of canvas with special paint based on lead salts, which protect against the harmful action of ultraviolet sunlight in equatorial areas during altitude flight, and they proved to be very effective against sunstroke. We never had the slightest headache.

The windshield was equipped with unbreakable Triplex glass; A pair of spare glass was brought on board the aircraft.

A chart holder was placed next to the pilot with everything needed for sanding, so that during the flight he could take bearings with the upper compass, and determine, with the methods of flat navigation, his position on the map, trace routes, take notes in the logbook, etc.

BAGGAGE

Given the length of the cruise and given that it took place through the most varied countries, often in even wild regions, it was necessary for the crew to bring with them, on board the aircraft, a very limited but still complete personal equipment. In order to be able to carry out even the duties of representation in the longest stops, the trousseau had to be completed with company clothes.

At first a weight of 30 kg had been established for the luggage, but in practice it was not possible, despite the most ingenious combinations, to reduce the weight of the luggage to less than 48 kg.

The space behind Ernesto's backrest was used as a trunk and was completely separated, with plywood partitions, from the adjacent space, on the left, occupied by the controls of the aircraft and a petrol tank.

HOODS

The aircraft being subject to easy breakdowns during its stay in the water between one stage and another, all precautions were taken to avoid inconveniences that could have jeopardized, in a truly unpleasant way, the success of the journey.

The controls of the aircraft were equipped with a locking system, to prevent them from being damaged either by the flapping caused by sudden and changing gusts of wind, or by the manouevre of undesirable onlookers.

The engine could be completely enclosed in a greaseproof cloth hood fixed with steel cables.

In the same way, the opening of the hull in correspondence with the pilot and the engine could be closed with a waterproof hood.

A special waterproof hood that completely closes the passengers' place and from which only their heads came out through elastic openings, was provided to prevent the hull from filling with water during its stay in the rough sea or under the violent downpours of the equatorial areas and so that the crew could enjoy a certain shelter while watching the outside. Then there were the normal propeller and magneto hoods.

LOAD DISTRIBUTION

The load distribution of the aircraft is shown in the list and sketches attached. All the material was placed in specially built boxes made of plywood or aluminium. These in turn were placed in the hull on shelves or bases, and fixed with straps.

All these accommodations inevitably imported a greater weight of 20-25 kg., but the great advantage of being able to place almost 300 kg was obtained. of small and bulky material in a stable way, easily accessible and within reach as needed, while leaving the space completely free at the bow hatch, which must allow the engine operator to move easily during the mooring manouevre, and to bottom and sail the anchor with strong current.

THE ENGINE

As mentioned above, speaking of the aircraft, a Lorraine 450 HP engine was mounted on the seaplane with the following characteristics:

Power - 450 HP RPM - 1850

- Three-row arrangement at 60° Stroke - mm. 180
- Bore - mm. 120 n. 180 Total displacement - dm3 24,5
- Power per litre displacement - 18.8 HP Compression - 5.2
- Total weight - kg. 380 Weight per HP - kg. 0,845
- Oil consumption HP-hour - gr. I I at full power - gr 16 at 2/3 power
- Fuel consumption HP-hour. Gr. 220 at full power. gr.211 at 9/10 power - gr. 245 to 2/3 power
- Hourly consumption at 2/3 power - Oil - kg. 73 - Petrol kg. 4,8

Although the replacement of the Fiat A. 12 bis 280 HP engine with the higher power Lorraine 400 HP engine for the preparation of the aircraft intended for travel was already planned for the S. 16 aircraft in service in the Royal Air Force, I gave preference to the 450 HP engine, for a series of considerations that I will briefly mention.

The 450 engine is directly derived from the 400, with which it has numerous interchangeable parts. It differs fundamentally in the different arrangement of the cylinders, the increased piston stroke (I0mm). and the increased number of revolutions (from 1700 to 1850).

These last two differences are the factors of the increase in power and are easily borne by the various parts of the engine, which in their use on the 400 had already confirmed large margins of robustness and durability.

The average speed of the pistons is 11 m. per second, already reached and with excellent results, also on other engines.

The severe and accurate experiments carried out on the 400 HP engine, during the very difficult tests passed with brilliant results, served as a basis in the construction of the 450 for the study and realization of a complex of small modifications that constituted as many improvements compared to the 400 HP engine.

Only the detail of the arrangement of the cylinders, in three W-shaped rows, has led, considered in itself. a small disadvantage for the increased frontal resistance to advance. a disadvantage largely compensated, however, by the decrease in weight of about 40 kg. made for the reduced length of the "crankcase" and the crankshaft.

The connection of the main rod with the secondary connecting rods, another notable difference between the two engines, is from a mechanical point of view, much more favourable in the 450 HP.

The balance and compensation of the rotating masses was also excellent in the 450, so much so that in operation at any speed no vibrations were detected at all.

It should also be noted that, with the exception of the few seconds necessary for take-off from the aircraft, since the engine was not intended to work at full speed, requiring a power of just over 300 HP in flight, the general operating conditions were certainly no worse than those of the 400 HP engine. To this was added:

I) a much greater accessibility, due to the larger opening of the angle between the rows of cylinders and better cooling of the engine;

2) A conspicuous increase in power, which allows the aircraft to take off with a payload of 1100 kg. and cope with many eventualities, such as those, for example, of the inevitable reduction in engine power after a few hundred hours of continuous operation.

Therefore the comparison between the small inconvenience caused by the increase in drag and the numerous mechanical advantages naturally led to the preference for the 450, especially since it was not a flight of pure speed. but of regularity.

Two engines were prepared for the journey: one of which was mounted on the aircraft; the other, as a backup, was sent to Tokyo. These two engines were common series and had no other preparation than a more accurate and controlled verification and assembly.

ENGINE DETAILS

a) Valves.

The valves are made of a special sikromo (?) steel, which has been tested very recently.

The tests of these valves were carried out during the preparation of the engines, and it was thus possible to observe the rigor with which the studies and experiments of the Lorraine Company are carried out.

The new valves to be tested are mounted, together with old type valves, on the heads of a cylinder group placed on a special test bench.

The camshafts are driven by an electric motor at normal rpm.

A gas lamp. by means of appropriate pipes. It is used to reproduce on the valves and in the cylinders with a jet of very hot gas the temperature conditions that are determined in normal engine operation.

These valves were already being tested at the beginning of the preparation of the engines and continued to operate, under the regular and continuous action of the electric motor and the gas lamp, for another fifteen days, interrupted only by a few very brief and occasional stops. for the sole purpose of checking the progress of the test.

At the end of this rigorous experiment. Also corroborated by other shorter ones on normal test benches, since there was actually a superiority of the silchrome valves compared to the previous ones, these were adopted for the engine intended for travel as in all the new production engines.

These valves gave extraordinarily satisfactory results throughout the journey, despite the abnormal temperatures to which they were sometimes exposed due to thelabourious and difficult take-off manoueuvres in the regions of the torrid zone.

A small modification was made to the rocker arms in the tappet adjustment aircraft, in order to make the adjustment much more stable. and this modification also gave excellent results.

b) Barbell bushings.

One of the points where engine lubrication is less safe is in correspondence with the rocker arm bushings on the intake side of the side cylinder groups.

In the two engines set up for the flight, the normal bushings have been replaced with bushings that end at the end of the axle with a tank, in which the oil that would otherwise escape is collected, thus constituting small tanks that better ensure the lubrication of the rocker arms themselves.

e) Crankshaft.

The crankshaft is extended at the rear to move the propeller hub away from the engine.

The original propeller hub bolts are fitted with a Grover nut and washer, as French military aviation does not require the use of lock nuts; however, in the present case it was considered more appropriate to resort to the use of the former with nuts and locknuts, as is usually done on the aircraft of the Royal Air Force.

d) Magnetos.

The magnetos are of the Scintilla type, and have the particularity of being able to be very easily disposed of in the various main parts.

It is thus easy to make the right and left magnetos interchangeable, as it has also been possible to replace the magnetos in the spare material brought on board the aircraft with only the parts that are actually subject to deterioration, for example by eliminating the heavy permanent magnetos.

These magnetos never caused the slightest annoyance during the whole journey. except in the last phase of it, due to a short circuit that occurred between two conductors of a contact carrier.

The fault was repaired by having the conductor covered with an ebonite tube rise from the contact tip.

The experience of previous flights has shown the usefulness of having the important parts of the engine in an easily accessible position. The task of the engine engineer is greatly facilitated, the engine can be easily and frequently inspected, the possibility of failure is therefore indirectly reduced.

For this reason, the Lorraine 450 HP engine, despite the W-shaped arrangement of the cylinder groups offering a considerable frontal surface. it was placed on the aircraft without a rollover and only the radiator and oil tank, located at the front, gave a slight initial air start with their shape.

The cylinder heads of the side groups are in a very protruding position with respect to the radiator, so in addition to being easily accessible, they are also directly cooled by the air current.

The carburettors of normal Lorraine engines, intended for fast military aircraft, in order to reduce drag, are placed in a position that is difficult to access, when the engine is mounted on a frame such as that of the S. 16 Ter, and can undergo special vortices and sucking by the air current.

To eliminate this inconvenience, the carburettors have been spaced out from the engine “crankcase”. modifying its attachments appropriately.

The air intakes of the carburettors have also been equipped with two very abundant windsocks, facing the bow to obtain an abundant flow of air even at low speed.

f) Fuel supply of the carburettors.

The carburettors are fed by two AM pumps. Special care has been taken in the design and assembly of the pipes that connect the pumps with the petrol tanks and carburettors, to minimize any causes of failure.

The tanks, which are three and have a total capacity of 910 litres, are headed by a single manifold and can be intercepted separately.

The collector is connected by a ring tubing to a balancer, and two separators and two filters are inserted on this ring.

The separators are intended to remove water and other heavy impurities from gasoline; and they work both by gravity and by the slight centrifugation obtained by the movement of the gasoline itself.

A tap allows these separators to be purge frequently and also to completely empty the petrol tanks before refuelling, if deemed appropriate.

All connections were made with copper pipes carefully mounted with fittings and elastic supports system AM, to absorb any vibrations.

A pressure gauge monitors the operation of the AM pumps.

The fuel supply throughout the trip, thanks to the goodness and practicality of the AM system, worked simply perfectly, and I never had any concern about it.

g) Start-up.

Lorraine engines are normally activated by acetylene gas.

This system is not too practical and has proven to be ineffective on Lorraine engines, because the oil from the cylinders reassembles along the pipe of the starting aircraft, up to the distributor and prevents it from working.

This system was replaced by another, simpler compressed air system. The compressed air supplied by a hand pump is contained in a cylinder with a capacity of about 12 litres.

The whole of the running gearing aircraft, including the hand pump, distributor, etc., weighs 30 kg.

At my request, the Lorraine Company also made a aircraft that allowed the motor to be started by hand, by means of a crank connected transversely with appropriate gears reduced to the front end of the shaft.

However, two people were needed to operate it. Practically, after the first two stages we could no longer use the compressed air cylinder, because it was too tiring to pump the trace air into it. We found it more convenient to start the engine by turning the propeller by hand to give compression, and so we did throughout the trip.

In Melbourne, therefore, all the automatic arrangement and related piping was removed from place and left on the ground.

h) Oil tank.

The oil tank, with a capacity of about 58 litres, was located in the front part of the engine tower and below the water radiator.

Inside the tank, in the front part and at a short distance from the internal part that is directly hit by the air during the flight, a copper sheet counterwall has been placed, which forms a cavity with the outer casing about 1 cm wide.

The oil return pipe in the tank branches off into three arms that bring the oil to the top of the tank and force it to laminate along the front surface of it so that before returning to circulation it is effectively cooled.

The oil tank, especially on the outward journey, gave us numerous headaches, since due to the insufficient strength of the welds it had to be dismantled from place and re-welded several times. In Melbourne it was reinforced, but on the way to Tokyo it had to be dismantled from its seat and rewelded once again.

In Tokyo it was reinforced again more effectively, and it did not bother so much until it arrived in Italy.

HOW THE ENGINE WAS DRIVEN

Throughout the journey the engine was kept at a speed of about 1550-1600 rpm, which corresponds to the power of 320 HP.

Maximum power was exploited only in the starting manoeuvres.

In the second part of the journey between Melbourne and Tokyo, even greater precautions were used given the long operation already undergone by the engine; and it was even, even under bad weather conditions in which it was necessary to be quickly at a higher altitude, avoided exceeding the speed of 1600 rpm.

A total of 251.30 hours of flight and distance were performed with the first engine37,000 kilometres; with the second engine 118.30 flight hours and 18,000 kilometres.

During the whole journey nothing had to be done except from time to time to change a few broken valve springs, and that on both engines, but this was of no importance, for on each valve there were three springs, each of which could independently operate the valve.

The first engine underwent two complete overhauls: one in Melbourne and one in Manila. In these revisions it was only necessary to grind the valve seats, which had suffered more from some unsuccessful starting attempt, which had produced an exaggerated increase in the temperature of the engine, than from the long operation.

The accident in Sydney is not attributable to the engine, having been caused by foreign objects accidentally penetrating the inside of the cylinders.

Taking advantage of the overhauls, some valves were also changed, more out of excess of precaution than anything else.

On the second engine, except for the repair of a magneto in Bangkok, no work was done during the whole trip.

For most of the return journey, due to the limited time available, the spark plugs were not even cleaned.

At each stage there was always the warning to throw away the oil left in the machine, so that the tank always started with a full tank of fresh oil, and this contributed greatly to the life of the engine.

The supply of petrol was entrusted to the “Shell-Mex” Company, which provided perfectly for the preparation of the fuel in all the places for which it was requested, and

in a very short time. This gasoline was everywhere of good quality and of a constant type.

In order to be able to travel long distances without internal maintenance to the engine, it was necessary to have an oil that burned in the cylinders leaving a minimum amount of solid carbonaceous residues.

These solid residues, encrusting the walls of the combustion chamber, disturb, as is well known, the progress of the thermal cycle, both by hindering cooling when necessary, and by reducing the heating and ionising effect of the walls on the mixture during the compression and bursting phase.

To minimise this inconvenience, R (Summer) Castrol oil was chosen and the Wakefield Company, producer of this oil, undertook to refuel in all locations and in the same way as already indicated for the refuelling of gasoline carried out by the Shell-Mex Company.

One of the reasons why the engine, apart from its intrinsic goodness, could work for such a long time without inconvenience, is precisely that of having used an oil with perfect characteristics and a good constant type of gasoline.

ENGINE AND AIRCRAFT REPLACEMENT PARTS

No engine spare parts were sent along the route. The spare parts that it was deemed appropriate to have were brought on board the aircraft itself.

Spare parts and tools necessary to carry out the engine overhaul were sent to Melbourne and Tokyo.

A complete replacement engine was sent to Tokyo, which was used for the return leg from Tokyo to Rome, replacing the engine that had already served on the Rome Melbourne and Melbourne to Tokyo section.

It was planned that only one aircraft was to be used for the completion of the entire flight. However, in order to prevent a trivial accident, seriously damaging the aircraft, from preventing the continuation of the flight, the spare parts corresponding to a complete aircraft were sent to Hong Kong, the central point and terminus of numerous navigation lines.

Other parts more easily subject to damage, such as: propellers, side floats, tail empennages, etc., were distributed along the route.

From an Australian newspaper article: the engine

The 450 hp Lorraine-Dietrich engine fitted to the Marchese de Pinedo's Savoia flying boat is now being overhauled at Point Cook. This power unit is a remarkable piece of engineering work.

Even in the early days of motoring the French firm was famous for the thoroughness of construction of its productions, but it would seem that the zenith of its endeavours has been reached in the 450 hp aero engine. The power plant is a 12 cylinder watercooled unit having a bore and stroke of 125 mm, and 180 mm respectively, Cylinders are cast in

pairs and placed in sets of four, one set of cylinders being vertical and the other two sets "veed" at 120 degrees. The valves are operated by overhead camshaft gear of unique construction. Three concentric valve springs are used for each valve, a method which is employed on Lorraine Deitrich cars. Only the cylinder heads are water jacketed, there being a water circulating pump driven from the timing gears of the engine, and circulating water through the ordinary type of honeycomb radiator. Three aero type Zenith carburettors are used, one for each set of four cylinders. The induction pipes and carburettors are waterjacketted, the carburettors being pressure fed from a 200 gallon tank located in the boat. Two magnetos are fitted.

STARTING UP The method employed in starting up is to turn the engrine over two or three times in order to draw in a firing mixture, and then, by means of a special rocking device on the magnetos controlled by a lever, a spark is produced in the cylinders which are under compression. (actually, there was a compressed air starting device that was carried in the first part of the flight, then dumped. See page 28).