



AT BANQUET—Among those gathered at banquet last night on eve of new Clipper flight to Antipodes were, from left to right, Dr. Robert A. Millikan, Mayor Bowron,

J. L. Van Norman, Amos Carter, Master of Ceremonies Mark McKee, who points out Clipper route, and Clarence Young, who is Pan American Pacific Coast division chief.

Times photo

## Air Corps Plane Crash Kills Nine

'Downdraft' Named as Tentative Cause of Army Bomber Mishap

DENVER, Aug. 23. (U.P.)—Storm "downdraft" with possibly 400 miles an hour velocity was blamed unofficially tonight for the crash and explosion of an Army bomber which killed nine men.

Two Air Corps officers and seven enlisted men died in the wreck last night of the twin-motored Douglas B-18-A bombing plane 25 miles southeast of Denver, during a thunderstorm.

### DETAILS UNKNOWN

An official Air Corps board of inquiry, headed by Maj. Leo H. Dawson, said it had not reached a "final conclusion" on exact cause of the crash. Army officials said, however, the terrific thunderstorm in the area probably created a 300-to-400-mile-an-hour downdraft which forced the huge craft to earth.

Maj. Dawson said the warplane was "shattered to bits" in the crash. Parts of it burned. The gasoline tanks, carrying 300 gallons of fuel, exploded and literally blew the nine men aboard into fragments, he declared.

Fifteen light practice bombs carried by the warplane did not explode and were found scattered with the wreckage in a radius of 300 yards at the scene of the crash, six miles southeast of Watkins, Colo. Maj. Dawson said the bombs were loaded with black powder and were not highly dangerous.

The official list of dead, released by the Army Air Corps technical school when it announced details of the crash 12 hours after the accident, included:

### CASUALTY LIST

- Second Lieutenant Wilbur A. Champagne, 27, Denver, pilot.
  - Second Lieutenant Robert P. Schmidtchen, 26, Valley Stream, L.I., N.Y., copilot.
  - Staff Sergeant William McDearman, 42, Lebanon, Tenn., a bombardier instructor.
  - Staff Sergeant Clarence L. Hobbs, 35, Irving, Tex., flight engineer.
  - Sergt. Truman Fraser, 26, McCrory, Ark., bombardier instructor.
  - Sergt. Roy Adkins, 25, Switz City, Ind., bombardier instructor.
  - Private Claude Hutchinson, 23, Denver, observationist.
  - Private Charles Kelly, 23, Texarkana, Ark., radio operator.
  - Private Weldon Bryson, 22, Deport, Tex., observationist.
- The death plane was a unit of the 37th Bombardment Squadron which arrived here recently from Barksdale Field, La., and was scheduled to be transferred to the Army's new air base at Anchorage, Alaska, in September.

## Mothers Continue Watch on Senate

WASHINGTON, Aug. 23. (AP)—Senate attendants indicated today that no attempt will be made to end the so-called "death watch" on the Burke-Wadsworth bill, which a group of women have started to express their opposition to compulsory military training.

The women, wearing black mourning veils, started their demonstration yesterday in the reception room just outside the Senate chamber and continued

## Flying Newsmen Head Toward Asia on Pan American Flight

'Times' Writer Describes Canton Island, Outpost Which May Form Part of Midocean Air Base System

BY JAMES BASSETT  
Times Staff Representative

CLONCURRY (Queensland) Aug. 23.—Bidding good-by to Australia from Darwin, the 13 newspapermen on the Los Angeles-to-New Zealand Pan American flight today headed toward Asia's tinderbox.

After viewing the Dutch Indies oil fields, the party will continue to Singapore, Indo-China and Hongkong. A former United Air Lines pilot is flying the party in a Southland-made Douglas plane over 500 miles of the Timor Sea.

### DARWIN LAST

Probably the last sight of Australia will be Darwin, which a few short years ago was nothing but a group of corrugated tin shacks but now is greatly changed. The party will spend five days in the Indies.

At Canton Island it was apparent that Uncle Sam, as exemplified by his United States Fleet and Army Air Corps, and John Bull have ambitious plans for this miniscular bit of lonely coral 150 miles south of the equator on Pan-American's Hawaii-New Zealand airline.

It's because of the war.

### STARTED BY NAVY

Four months ago a flight of six naval flying boats of the PBT patrol bombardment type arrived here one late afternoon. They glided into Blue Lagoon and cut their 12 engines. It was Canton's largest visitation in years, for more than 50 officers and men made the hop from Pearl Harbor, 1915 miles northeast.

That was the tip-off.

More unexpectedly, destroyers, cruisers and minelayers of the fleet periodically slip over the horizon and drop sea anchors off Canton. Nobody knows much about their activities. Since the war fleet movements have been even more mysterious.

### HAS NO HARBOR

Yet the tiny reef, 27 miles around its pearshaped perimeter, hasn't a harbor for them. Its lagoon could hold a capital ship—if the 300-foot entrance were blasted free of coral obstructions and the shallow spots erased from the nine-mile lakelet itself.

Here's what appears to be in store for Canton:

It may form part of a vast system of midocean bases, stretching fanwise to the west and south of the Hawaiian group, where four-engined landplanes (as well as the Navy's big seaplanes) could land.

### ROOM FOR RUNWAY

Plenty of room exists on Canton, for example, for a 2000-yard runway.

Provision of such facilities would give Brig. Gen. Walter Frank's 18th Wing at Honolulu a formidable striking range toward the only potential enemy America has in the eastern world.

Much of the equipment already has been installed. Canton's radio is the Pacific's most powerful directional wireless—better even than Guam or Wake. Our own trail-blazing flight began "working" it a few hundred miles after leaving Honolulu.

### DEFENSE MEAGER

At present, the only weapon for the defense of Canton is a 12-gauge shotgun for driving off too-inquisitive frigate birds.

Of the 40 men (and women) inhabiting it, only five are English. And of the latter, two are the dark-skinned Gilbert Island native and his wife who serve

Jock Fleming, the crochety resident Britisher. So from the colonization viewpoint, the United States is pretty well ahead.

Fleming has taken America's influx rather hard. To him, Canton is John Bull's island. He muttered "stealing Crown property" when one Panair lad transplanted a cocoanut tree from his end of the atoll to America's. He rarely mingles with the intruders.

### AMERICANS THERE

Thirty-five Americans include a trio of Interior Department weathermen, two officials' wives and Panair's "army of occupation."

Ships, other than the dark-of-the-moon naval visitations, are scarce.

Weather remains as serene as the night stars mostly. From February to April, the rainy season, skies open and drop upwards of 25 to 30 inches of fresh water on Canton. Once four and a half inches deluged the islet in seven hours. Which is raining.

### WINDS STEADY

Winds blow steadily from the southeast. Cinema-type hurricanes haven't blown here in the memory of living men, although the original whaler, Canton, cracked up in '54 in some sort of a major gale.

Forty knots is the heaviest recorded by the local meteorologists; and this lasted only a few minutes.

Speaking of weather, on the nearest land to Canton, Enderbury Island, lying some 31 miles due south, the Interior Department stations three Hawaiian boys with a two-way radio. They send air-mass weather "front" data. Other stations have been established on Howland (near which Amelia Earhart disappeared in '37) Baker, Jarvis, Christmas and Palmyra. Most of these fall, with Canton, within the amicable British-American jurisdictional ruckus.

### STRANGE PLACE

Highest point on this lonely atoll is the 40-foot beacon tower from which blinks a 2,000,000-candlepower searchlight. Just in case the Clipper arrives after dark. Or for mariners who might venture into these complex waters.

All-in-all, Canton's a funny place.

It's symbolic, in an incredibly narrow area, of all the world's territorial rivalry. You might epitomize this in Jock Fleming's latest huff. He refused to recognize the supply ship last visit—because it flew the Stars and Stripes instead of the Union Jack.

## Wrestler Arrested on Check Charge

Jack Holland, 28-year-old wrestler, was arrested yesterday in a hotel at Broadway and Seventh St., on a warrant from Santa Ana police charging him with passing bad checks in that city. The warrant called for \$10,000 bail. Detective Lieutenants C. C. Cope and Bert Jones, arresting officers, said Holland is believed to have given worthless checks amounting to several hundred dollars to Jack Daro, sports promoter.

## Clipper Flight Plan Celebrated

Two Hundred Attend Dinner on Eve of Takeoff For Antipodes

Celebrating the third and final inspection flight over the Pan American Airways' newly established route from the United States to the Antipodes, more than 200 guests, including the 15 men who will make the flight today, attended a banquet last night at the Hotel Huntington in Pasadena.

J. L. Van Norman, president of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, gave a short talk in which he declared the flight will be a historical event because Pan American is conquering the whole western hemisphere. "These airplanes will go 'down under,'" he said, "and will build business, better relationship and a stronger tie with the English-speaking people of that area."

Others introduced by Mark T. McKee, director of Pan American, were Mayor Bowron, who will be one of the passengers; C. W. Koiner, Pasadena City Manager; David O'Leary, Pasadena Deputy District Attorney; Charles Paddock, managing editor of the Pasadena Star-News; Attorney Joseph Scott, and Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney, chairman of the board of Pan American, who will also be a passenger.

The plane is scheduled to take off at Cabrillo Beach at 4 p.m. today.

## Hinshaw Praises Air Industry Here

Declares Southland Plants Talk of Capital

"California's aviation industry and its splendid accomplishment is the talk of Washington," said Representative Carl Hinshaw of the 11th District as he arrived by airplane yesterday at Burbank.

"One half of all the airplanes produced in the nation," he said, "are being built right here. Since everyone knows the importance of airplanes at this moment of world history, one can easily see why Southern California is in the limelight."

Hinshaw is taking advantage of a three-day recess of Congress for a hurried visit home.

"I came home principally to thank the many friends who have been working in the interests of my re-election," he said. "They have been doing my work at home for me while I've been doing their work in Washington."

## Wilmington Fiesta Comes to End Tonight

Wilmington today will climax its three-day fiesta with a Western parade along Avalon Blvd. at 2:30 p.m. in which 15 bands, 1000 horsemen and units from Ft. MacArthur will participate. Leo Carrillo will be grand marshal.

The community's celebration will end tonight with a barn dance in the block-long cargo shed at Berth 181, capable of accommodating several thousand couples.

Dine at the Famous FRENCH