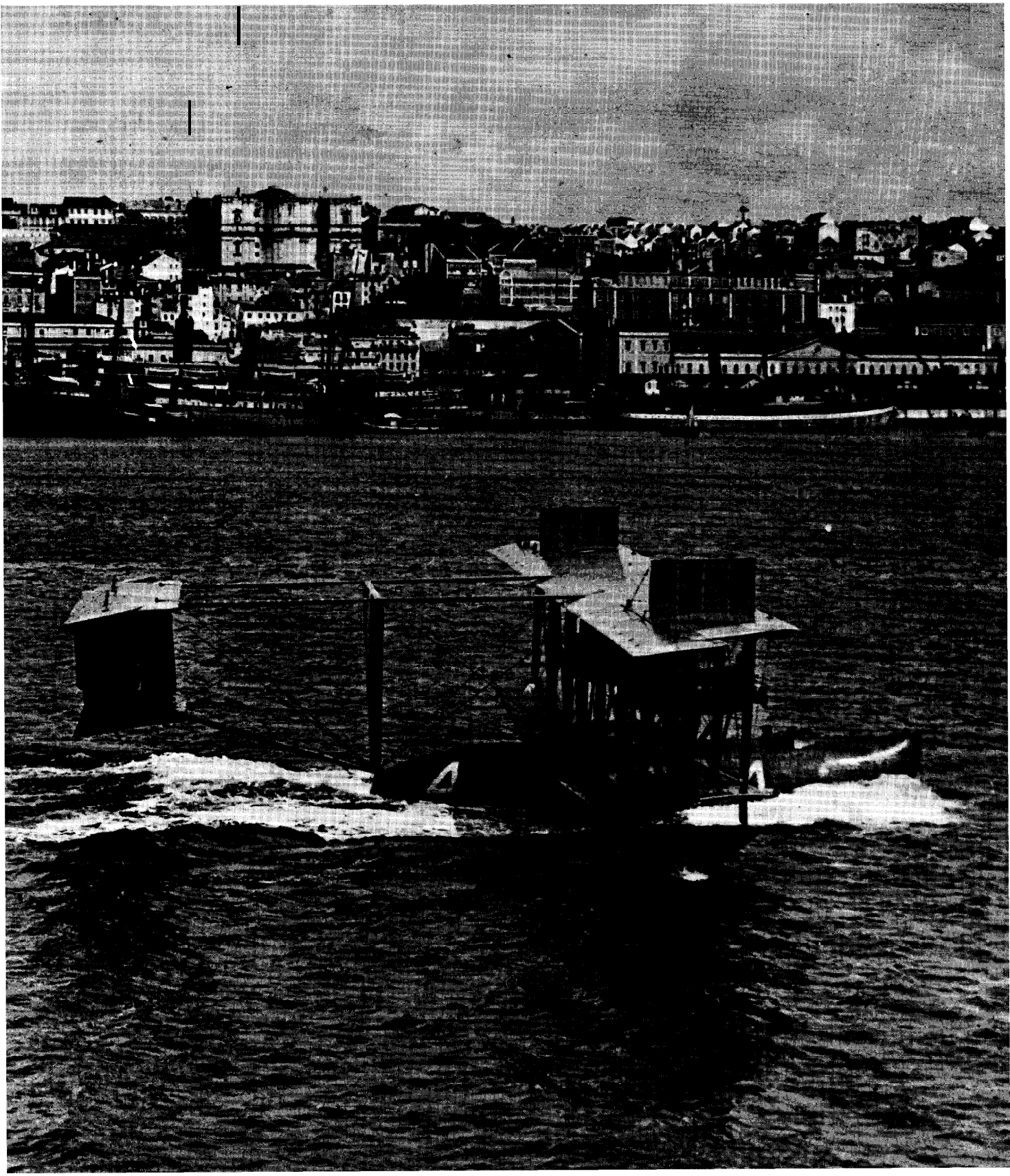
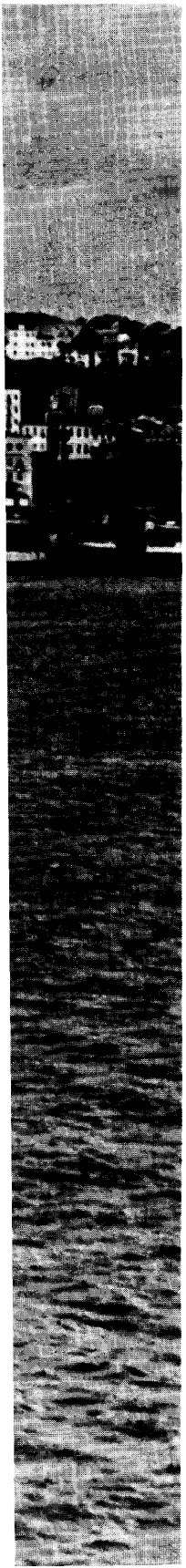
THE FIRST FLIGHT
ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

'We are safely across

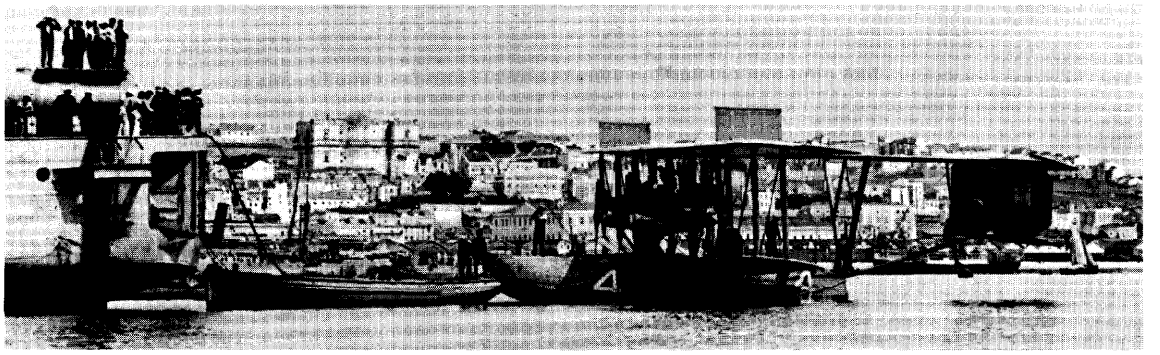


the pond.

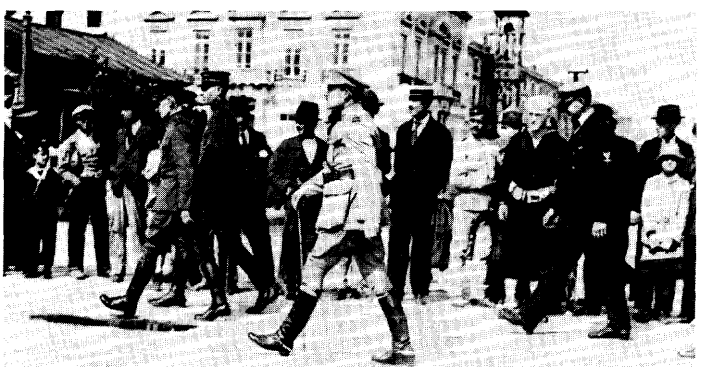


The job is finished!'

— LCdr. Albert C. Read

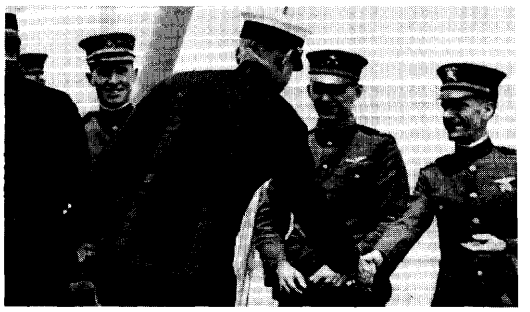


ARRIVAL *of NC-4 in Lisbon (left) and apparent loss of Hawker and Grieve over the North Atlantic shattered British hopes of being the first to fly Atlantic. The Americans received worldwide acclaim and were feted in one gala celebration after the other.*



THE REST is history. Read arrived in Lisbon harbor at twilight on May 27, 1919, the first man to cross the Atlantic by air. He "finished the job" four days later as the NC-4 landed at Plymouth. The last leg had been planned for "sentimental" reasons. Later, in London, he was pleased to grip the hand of Harry Hawker. The two British flyers had been forced down in the mid-Atlantic but managed to ditch near a passing ship. Lack of a wireless had postponed news of the rescue for several days.

The excitement over the flight of the NC-4 soon faded. Within two weeks the British team of Alcock and Brown accomplished what Hawker had set out to do. A month later, the dirigible R-34 flew from Scotland to New York — and then returned to England. More flights followed, including Dick Byrd's, his dream of flying the Atlantic finally come true.



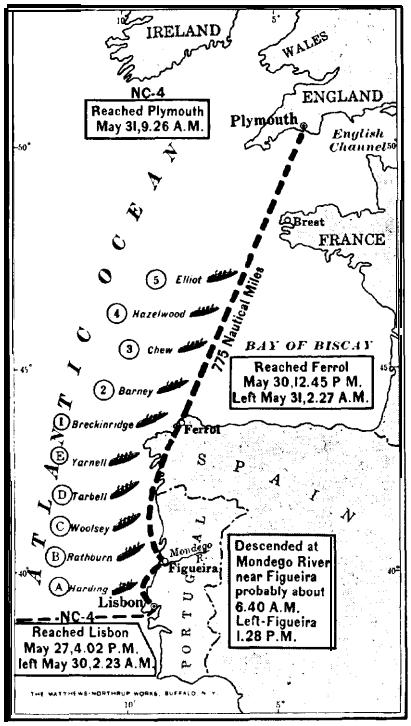
And for the men involved with the NC project, the future held divergent paths.

Glenn Curtiss, who had done so much for the development of aircraft in America, wearied of his courtroom battles with attorneys of the all-encompassing Wright aero patents. He moved to Florida where his investments in such holdings as Hialeah and Opa-locka paid handsome dividends: in five years, more than he had ever made in building airplanes.

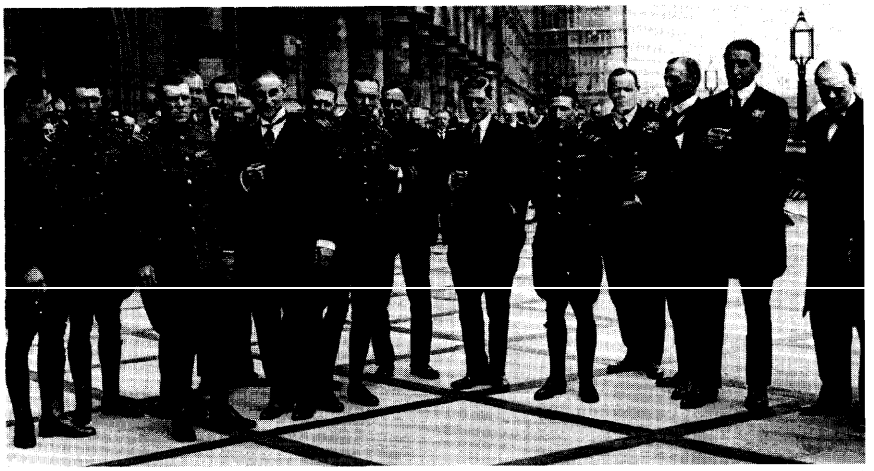
Jim Breese, too, became a successful businessman, and Walter Hinton left the service to find adventure on the Amazon.

Most of the others stayed with the Navy, completing lengthy and, in some cases, illustrious careers. Bellinger, Byrd, Mitscher, Read and Towers all achieved flag rank. During World War II, Mitscher's work with Task Force 58 earned him the title of "Admiral of the Marianas." Later, Towers became Commander of the Pacific Fleet.

THE FIRST FLIGHT ACROSS THE ATLANTIC



TUMULTUOUS RECEPTIONS *greeted LCdr. Read and crew in Plymouth. Flight from Portugal involved two stops en route.*



LORD MAYOR *of Plymouth (above) greets the crew. Later in London (right), the Americans receive heroes' welcome from Prince of Wales, Winston Churchill and officials.*

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