

TRN/AVI/4#4



(Formerly)

2 3 2 4	2 3 2 4

2324
FOR

FLIGHTS OVER FALKLANDS.

CONNECTED FILES.

NUMBER

1295

Unidentified Ships and Aircraft in the vicinity of the Falkland Islands.

DECODE.

No. 35

TELEGRAM SENT.

From SECRETARY OF STATE to GOVERNOR

Despatched: 11.12.63 Time: 1720 Received: 12.12.63 Time: 0900

R.U.R. 79. The American Embassy have requested overflight clearance Falkland South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands during period 18 January to 7 February 1964 for U.S. Navy Superconstellation NC-121K No. 145925 engaged on project Magnet an Air Force geomagnetic survey. Grateful to learn whether clearance granted. No landings anticipated.

Secer

P/L : ER

Reply at 2

DECODE.

TELEGRAM SENT.

From GOVERNOR to SECRETARY OF STATE

Despatched: 12.12.63 Time: 1010 Received: Time:

105. Yourtel 79 American overflight. Clearance
granted.

EPA/ER
P/L

BW news item
14. 1. 64

ll

DECODE.

TELEGRAM.

From..... Colonial Secretary, Stanley.

To..... Administrative Officer, South Georgia.

Despatched : 15th January, 19 64 Time : 1525

Received : 19 Time :

No. 14.

Overflight clearance South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands has been given for U.S. Navy Superconstellation engaged on project Magnet and Geomagnetic Survey during period 18th January, to 7th February. No landings anticipated.

Secretary

See 5

GTC
HLB/TB.

NEWS ITEM

Commencing tomorrow Saturday the United States Navy, using a Superconstellation NC-121K, will be engaged for a period of three weeks aerial Survey work which will take in the Falklands area extending over South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands.

It is not anticipated that any landings will be made.

16.1.64

HLB/TB.

HLB
16.1.64

DECODE.

No. 138.

TELEGRAM.

5

From Administrative Officer, South Georgia.

To Colonial Secretary, Stanley.

Despatched : 17th January, 1964. *Time :* 1230

Received : 17th January, 1964. *Time :* 1130

3 No. 25. Your coded telegram No. 14 acknowledged.

Administrative Officer

P/L : IH

(Incl.) HLB

Jan
17.1.64

THE "POURQUOI PAS ?" TRANS-POLAR EXPEDITION

Leader : John Huckle
Secretary : Mrs. E.I. Kirk,

Address : Battledown Manor,
Charlton Kings,
Cheltenham,
Glos., England.



26th February, 1965.

Dear Sir,

I hope that you will excuse the length of this letter, but with the somewhat irregular mail service to your Colony, I feel it is better if I try to explain the aims and objectives of the "Pourquoi Pas?" Trans-Polar Flight before I ask for your advice upon those matters concerning which your Government may be in a position to offer us some assistance. I would be most grateful however if you could treat all the information contained herein as confidential, since our project is as yet still in the planning stage, and the premature release of some details could seriously impair our freedom to negotiate with certain interested parties. I am confident that you will appreciate this aspect better as you read on.

The basic concept is to make a first circumnavigation of the world passing over both the North and South Poles en route. The expedition will be a joint Anglo-American undertaking: the aircraft used will be a modified light twin-engined monoplane and a subsidiary aim is to prove the reliability of such an aeroplane under the most rigorous flying conditions. It will be American built and registered in the United States. The crew will consist of myself, as expedition leader and navigator, utilising the privileges of my United States commercial pilot's licence, and an American female pilot as captain of the aircraft: this provides us with a further secondary ambition - she will be the first woman to reach the South Pole.

Since it is obviously essential to carry out a considerable amount of preparatory planning before undertaking a flight of this nature, the actual date that the flight has been scheduled to depart from New York is early in September, 1965. The intended route is as follows:- from New York, through Goose Bay in Labrador, to the American Air Base at Thule in northwestern Greenland. This will be the take-off point for the crossing of the north polar basin, and the landing will be made at Nordvik or Khatanga in northern Siberia. Preliminary inquiries show that no difficulties are likely to be encountered in obtaining the necessary permission to utilise Russian bases, provided that we adhere to certain regulations stipulated by the government of the U.S.S.R. None of these stipulations in themselves would serve to hinder our flight. However, in making our initial approaches to the Soviet authorities, I should mention that we have not disclosed the full scope of our plans. We have simply requested a clearance to operate through the Soviet Union for a flight from New York to Tokio. This step has been taken to avoid the possibility of the Russians themselves mounting a similar expedition and "beating us to it". This then is the main consideration when we ask that our ultimate aims be regarded as confidential. Two further landings will be made in the Soviet Union: probably at Yakutsk and Khabarovsk, and during our overflying Russia we will be accompanied by a Russian Air Force officer in our aircraft.

The flight south across the Pacific will be made through Tokio, Guam, Port Moresby, to Sydney in Australia, where we expect to arrive during the first

/week

Reply 10

final/

week in September, and where arrangements are being made to allow our aircraft to undergo a thorough overhaul and have the ski undercarriage fitted. From Australia we shall proceed to Invercargill in New Zealand, which will be the advanced base for our trans-Antarctic flight. We estimate we shall be ready to commence this attempt during the second week in October, and our first landing will be made at McMurdo Sound for refuelling. A further refuelling will be carried out at the South Polar Base, and thence we shall endeavour to fly direct to Deception Island in the South Shetlands. Our next destination after Deception Island is Port Stanley, and thence to Montevideo. Here a further overhaul and removal of the ski undercarriage will be effected. The return to New York from Montevideo will be via Asuncion, Manaus, Trinidad and Bermuda (or possibly, Puerto Rico).

Since you will be primarily interested in that part of our flight which lies over territory administered by your Government, I will go into this part of our itinerary in greater detail. The landing at the South Pole will be as brief as possible: very low temperatures may be anticipated so early in the season, and although arrangements are being made to overcome the foreseen problems, particularly with regard to the effect of low temperatures on engine and propeller lubricants and upon batteries, it will greatly facilitate our flight if we are able to refuel and continue with the minimum possible delay. For the flight over the main continental mass between the Pole and Graham Land we shall rely on two separate navigational systems: firstly sights will be taken with the sextant as opportunity and necessity dictate: secondly we hope to be able to use other American (and possibly British) Antarctic bases to provide beacons for our A.D.F., two independent units being installed in our aircraft to safeguard against the unserviceability of one. Eights Station, if operating at that time, will obviously be of very great assistance to us in this respect. Routing up either the west or the east coast of the Graham Land peninsula will depend upon the prevailing meteorological conditions, but it is hoped to be able to carry out this part of the flight in v.m.c., preferably along the west coast of Graham Land, in which case the continental plateau will be left at the southern end of the King George VI Sound. For the landing at Deception Island we hope to be allowed to use the strip near the British base in Whalers Bay, or, if the harbour still contains fast ice, a suitable stretch of this. The aircraft will be equipped to mark out ice for landing, and although this is principally a safety device in case an emergency landing has to be made at any time, it would serve equally well for conditions at Deception if the harbour were still frozen.

We would be most grateful if we could be accommodated in the British Antarctic Survey base during our stay at Deception Island. This we trust will not exceed one or two days, but we shall obviously require some rest there as the elapsed time since our departure from McMurdo will have been in the region of seventeen hours, and with a time zone change of some fifteen hours in addition it will take a short time for our body metabolism to re-establish its pattern.

The flight from Deception Island to Port Stanley will take an estimated four hours. We hope it will prove possible for you to authorise our use of the race course as a landing field. I appreciate that the surface of this is frequently rather soft, but we do not anticipate undue difficulty since the aircraft will still be fitted with the tricycle ski/wheel undercarriage. However, should the cross wind component exceed the safe limits, it may then prove necessary for us to divert to Teal Inlet as was done during the period

/that

period/

that Auster landplanes were in service with the F.I.G.A.S., and our aircraft could then be brought into Stanley at the first convenient opportunity. Because of the possibility of a soft surface on the race course we have decided that the ski/wheel configuration will be retained until after our departure from the Falkland Islands, despite the speed penalty thus incurred during the flight to Montevideo.

As regards safety arrangements throughout our flight, we are naturally endeavouring to cover as many foreseeable emergencies as is practicable within the limitations imposed by the size of the aircraft. The maximum range with full tanks will be in excess of 3,000 miles in still air conditions, which gives us an ample margin for the longest leg over your territories. Both H.F. and V.H.F. radio will be carried, and with the former we hope it will prove possible to maintain continuous radio contact throughout our flight. Our navigation equipment should prove adequate for all eventualities, and the aircraft will of course be fully instrumented. Emergency equipment, such as tent, sleeping bags, primus and rations will be carried, and negotiations are proceeding concerning the provision of a lightweight life raft.

I appreciate that it is at present too distant a prospect to ask your Government to give firm undertakings upon any point as yet. Nevertheless, to assist us in our planning, I would be most grateful if you could briefly indicate what the probable reactions of your Government might be expected to be on the following specific questions:-

- (a) Assuming that the necessary clearances for the flight have been obtained from the Government of the United States of America, and that Her Britannic Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have also indicated their approval, would the Government of the Falkland Islands and the Dependencies wish to make any reservations concerning the section of the flight conducted over and through their possessions?
- (b) In the event of this flight taking place, would the British Antarctic Survey be willing to assist in maintaining radio communications during the actual flight over British Antarctica? Should the answer to this section be in the affirmative, I would be very greatly obliged if you could inform me as to the H.F. frequencies on which the stations may be expected to operate during October.
- (c) Would the Government of the Falkland Islands be prepared to offer similar facilities to those mentioned in (b) above from their radio station in Port Stanley to cover our flight legs between Deception Island and Montevideo? If so, on which frequencies may we expect them to be able to operate?
- (d) Assuming that the replies to (b) and (c) above are in the affirmative, could we call upon the services of the meteorological stations in the Colony and the Dependencies to provide reports and forecasts during the course of our flights?
- (e) Does the British Antarctic Survey maintain a depot of 100/130 octane aviation fuel and aircraft lubricants at Deception Island? If so, would they be willing to sell us a quantity not to exceed 240 Imperial gallons upon our arrival there? If lubricants are carried by this base, I would be most grateful if you could notify me as to the grade specifications please.

/ (f)

MET

please./

- (f) If no fuel depot exists, or the octane value is incorrect, would the B.A.S. be willing to ship the necessary amount for us from Montevideo to Deception Island during the 1964/65 Antarctic summer? (I should perhaps mention that to allow for possible wastage or damage, we would in these circumstances request to ship a maximum of ten drums of fuel and oil in all).
- (g) Does the F.I.G.A.S. hold a supply of 100/130 octane avgas in Port Stanley, and if so, would they be willing to sell us a quantity not to exceed 420 Imperial gallons upon our arrival there?
- (h) In view of the conflicting national aspirations in the Falkland Islands Dependencies, and having regard to the fact that this expedition will be half British in complement and inspiration, I would be grateful for any suggestions you may feel inclined to make regarding the policy to be adopted in any approaches we may feel obliged to make towards the other nations interested in the area. You may wish to know that I shall be consulting the Foreign Office in London upon this point later this year. However, as a safeguard against emergencies during our flight, it is our intention in due course to inform the Governments of the Republics of Argentina and Chile of our proposals, and one is forced to bear in mind while making our plans, that stress of weather or other cause may force us to use a landing area in the Antarctic under the control of one of these nations, or we may be obliged later to divert to either Punta Arenas or an airport on the Patagonian coast. I would like to stress that in our approaches to these two governments it is not our intention to seek permission for our flight over any section of the Antarctic: it will be in fact a simple matter of notification as an act of courtesy on our part. The unlikely necessity of a diversion to an airport in Argentina after taking off from the Falklands has been considered in our planning, and it is appreciated that this might prove embarrassing, but we feel that we shall be protected to some extent by the fact that our aircraft is American registered, and my advice on this subject also indicates that in the circumstances it would be diplomatically unwise for the Argentine Government to hamper to any marked degree the continued flight of an American woman who has just achieved a very notable feat.
- (i) Obviously our payload restrictions will be severe: nevertheless, if there is any particular project that would assist the work of the British Antarctic Survey and which you feel might usefully be included in our flight, we would be only too pleased to consider this, and will certainly endeavour to incorporate it into our programme. For instance, we felt that we might perhaps be of some service to you in the matter of letter mail, particularly ex-Deception Island and ex-Falkland Islands. Perhaps you would be kind enough to consider this aspect and inform us in your reply of your views? One minor project we very much hope to achieve during our flight which I have not mentioned above is the dropping of a small floral tribute over the spot where Captain Scott and his companions met their deaths during their return from the South Pole.

Before closing you may wish me to outline the personal qualifications of the two members of this expedition, and from this I think you will appreciate that the flight is not being undertaken without a considerable amount of experience behind it, both aeronautically and appertaining to the territories under your jurisdiction. The aircraft captain has a total of over 4,000 hours flying experience, including 2,500 in command in the category of aircraft we shall employ. In addition she has considerable knowledge of cold weather operations with aircraft equipped with skis. My own total flying experience amounts to more than 5,000 hours, and in addition to the C.P.L. No. 1 issued to me by your Government, I currently hold, British, United States, Australian and Bahamas commercial licences. As you may know I was a member of the F.I.D.S.

/from

F.I.D.S./

From 1946 to 1950, during which I served as H.E. the Governor's liaison officer aboard both the "Trepassey" and the "Pitzroy" during their southern voyages of the 1946/7 season. For two months I was in charge at Port Lockroy, and later for a year at Depception Island. My final two years in the Antarctic with the F.I.D.S. were spent based at Stonington Island, where I undertook two major sledge journeys with Sir Vivian Fuchs into the King George VI Sound. From 1950 to 1956 I was employed by your Government, and flew with the F.I.C.A.S. for three of those years. During the 1956/7 Antarctic season I sailed as navigator aboard the F.I.D.A.S.E. base ship "Oluf Sven" during her voyage to the west coast of Graham Land: and from 1957 to 1960 I flew helicopters from Messers Chr. Salvesen's whaling factory ships, involving more than 500 hours flying in the Antarctic, a large proportion of which was off the coasts of Graham Land and Alexander Island. And just to complete the picture, the four years that I have spent with my present employers have included flying operations in New Guinea, Borneo, United States, Persian Gulf, Sahara Dessert and Great Britain.

I should perhaps end as I began, by apologising for the length it has been necessary to make this letter! You may rest assured that the members of this expedition will do their utmost to bring it to a successful conclusion, and we look forward to hearing from your Government and hope that you will grant us permission in due course to attempt the flight through your territory. As I am currently engaged in overseas flying operations, I would be much obliged if your reply could be addressed to:-

The Secretary,
The "Pourquoi Pas?" Trans-Polar Expedition,
Battledown Manor,
Charlton Kings,
CHINTHAM, Glos.

With kindest regards to all my former colleagues in the Government.

Yours sincerely,

for Duck

To: The Hon. the Colonial Secretary,
The Secretariat,
Port Stanley,
FALKLAND ISLANDS.

Minute 8

Hon. Col. Sec.

Reference your Minute 7 and sub-para. (d) on page 3 of Enclosure 6, subject to the approval of the British Antarctic Survey, this Office could provide the following meteorological support:-

- (a) Subject to the availability of suitable communications facilities, South Polar Base (or other scheduled refuelling point next prior to Deception) could be provided with a landing forecast for Whalers Bay. However, it should be made quite clear that, in the absence of forecasting staff at Deception, the landing forecast would have to be treated with considerable reserve since the precise effects of local topography on wind direction and strength, and hence on visibility in any drifting snow, cannot be assessed by forecasters at Stanley. It is assumed that, in accordance with usual practice, it would be the responsibility of the meteorological staff at the previous stop to provide the actual route-forecast to Deception.
- (b) If B.A.S. can arrange suitable communication facilities, I see no reason why our meteorological staffs at Adelaide Island, Argentine Islands, and Deception Island should not be able to provide hourly weather reports, during the period of the flight, to the aircraft and/or to any ground station with which it is maintaining contact.
- (c) The aircrew at Deception Island can be provided with a route forecast for the sector Deception/Falklands, together with a landing forecast for Stanley (or Teal Inlet). Stanley would supply this.
- (d) Subject to the availability of a suitable communications channel, hourly weather reports for Stanley could be supplied to the aircraft while in flight Deception/Falklands.
- (e) The aircrew at Stanley, can, subject to adequate notice, be provided with a route-forecast for the sector Stanley/Montevideo. Given time to obtain a reply from Montevideo Airport via the usual telegraphic channels, no difficulty is expected in obtaining landing forecasts for Montevideo or alternate Uruguayan aerodromes, but I see little prospect of obtaining mandatory landing forecasts for alternates in Argentina.

2. Before meteorological support can be provided, we shall require to know whether the aircrew will wish to have the information in clear or in standard international code-forms, and also the maximum altitude at which the aircraft is likely to operate.

3. Enclosure 6 leaves some doubt as to the probable date of this proposed flight. The error in dating the letter suggests they mean September 1964 rather than September 1965.

W. S. S. Shelly

C.M.O.

23.4.64.

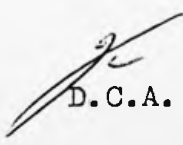
H.C.S.

9
With reference to your minute 7, I have read enclosure 6 and the sections which directly effect this department are page 3 sub-para (c) and page 4 sub-para (g).

As far as I am concerned I can see no objections to the aircraft landing here, except for the fact that no prepared landing strip is available and responsibility for a safe landing must rest with the Captain of the aircraft. Should a diversion be necessary then it will be necessary to obtain permission from the Manager at Teal Inlet for the aircraft to land there. One other point which will have to be considered is, would the Stanley Sports Association be prepared to allow an aircraft fitted with skis to land on the race course and risk having the course churned up with little chance of the course being repaired in time for the annual meeting. Personally I am at a loss to see why a landing on rough ground in the Falkland Islands is apparently preferred to a landing at the air port at Punta Arenas which is in fact some twenty miles closer to Deception Island than we are here, and which could provide full radio cover and servicing facilities, at the same time removing the source of embarrassment to which the writer refers.

Reference (c) the only radio cover this department can offer is air to ground communication, H.F. 4675 K.C/s and 5580 K.C/s maximum range 200 statute miles. Other aids may be available through Stanley radio these could be advised by the Supt. of Posts and Telecommunications.

Reference (g) we do not normally stock 100/130 Oct. AVGAS but we do possess 10 drums of this fuel which is of mid 1963 vintage and would be prepared to sell to the Expedition. Lubricating oil would not be available.


D.C.A.

28/4/64.

4th May,

64.

Dear Mr. Huckle,

Thank you for your letter of the 26th of February, 1964, concerning your proposed circumnavigational flight.

2. As far as we are concerned I can see no objection to your aircraft landing here, except for the fact that no prepared landing strip is available and the responsibility for a safe landing must rest with the captain of the aircraft.

3. As you know the Stanley Race Course is not the smoothest of landing strips and you should consider landing at the airport at Punta Arenas which is, in fact, some 20 miles closer to Deception Island than Stanley. Punta Arenas could also provide full radio cover and servicing facilities without providing any of the embarrassment to which you refer.

4. Given rather more detail I am sure we could assist you with radio cover.

5. Although we do not usually stock 100/130 octane ^{avg} aviation fuel it so happens that we do have a reserve stock of ten drums which we could sell to you if the need arose. We have none of the lubricating oils which you require.

6. On Antarctic matters you must consult Sir Vivian Fuchs of the British Antarctic Survey at his London Office, which is just behind Victoria Station. Subject to this approval meteorological support could be given on the following lines:-

- (a) Subject to the availability of suitable communications facilities, South Polar Base (or other scheduled refuelling point next prior to Deception) could be provided with a landing forecast for Whalers Bay. However, it must be made quite clear, in the absence of forecasting staff at Deception, landing forecast would have to be treated with considerable reserve since the precise effects of local topography on wind direction and strength, and hence on visibility in any drifting snow, cannot be assessed by forecasters at Stanley. It is assumed that, in accordance with usual practice, it would be the responsibility of the meteorological staff at the previous stop to provide the actual route-forecast to Deception.
- (b) If British Antarctic Survey can arrange suitable communication facilities, there is no reason why their meteorological staffs at Adelaide Island, Argentine Islands, and Deception Island should not be able to provide hourly weather reports, during the period of the flight, to the aircraft and/or to any ground station with which it is maintaining contact.

The Secretary,
The "Pourquoi Pas?" Trans Polar Expedition
Battledown Manor,
Charlton Kings,
Cheltenham,
Glos.,
ENGLAND.

- (c) The aircrew at Deception Island can be provided with a route forecast for the sector Deception/Falklands, together with a landing forecast for Stanley (or Teal Inlet). Stanley would supply this.
- (d) Subject to the availability of a suitable communications channel, hourly weather reports for Stanley could be supplied to the aircraft while in flight Deception/Falklands.
- (e) The aircrew at Stanley, can, subject to adequate notice, be provided with a route-forecast for the sector Stanley/Monteideo. Given time to obtain a reply from Monteideo Airport via the usual telegraphic channels, no difficulty is expected in obtaining landing forecasts for Monteideo or alternate Uruguayan aerodromes, but there is little prospect of obtaining mandatory landing forecasts for alternates in Argentina.

7. You of course understand that before meteorological support can be provided, we must know whether the aircrew will wish to have the information in clear or in standard international code-forms, and also the maximum altitude at which the aircraft is likely to operate.

8. The error in dating your letter leaves me in some doubt as to the probable date of your proposed flight and I'm not sure whether you mean September, 1964 or September, 1965.

9. I have passed on your regards to the many people who remember you here and they reciprocate them.

10. I shall be obliged if you will let me know your final decision and if there is any other information I can provide you with I shall be pleased to do so.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) W. H. Thompson

COLONIAL SECRETARY.

Pa
5.6.64

DECODE.

*CS. Please give clearance and
note for broadcast nearer to
25 January to what people
are not surprised.*

TELEGRAM SENT.

From SECRETARY OF STATE to GOVERNOR

OK 3/12
↑

Despatched: 2:12:64 Time: 1530 Received: 3:12:64 Time: 1130 11

CONFIDENTIAL.

No. 215.

American Military Aircraft.

nuclear?

Clearance requested U.S.N.C. 121 quite clear aircraft number 145925 based in Chile to overfly Falkland Islands, South Georgia and South Sandwich between January 25th and February 16th 1965. Flights in connection American "man in space" programme. Crew details pilot Commander Childers plus 21 crew. Grateful early reply.

cypher 'E' : SC

----- ? corrupt

Reply at 12

Reply phoned to SC.

BU 20/68 Si fa

DECODE.

TELEGRAM SENT.

From GOVERNOR to SECRETARY OF STATE

Despatched: 4:12:64 Time: 1600 Received: Time:

CONFIDENTIAL.

No. 172.

11

Your telegram No. 215.

American Military Aircraft.

No objection, approved.

CYPHER 'E' : SC

la
BU 20.1.65.1