

U.S. AIR MAIL SERVICES

Offshoots from the Transcontinental Route

THE month of April last saw the eighth anniversary of the United States Air Mail Service, and during this period of its existence close on 12,000,000 miles have been flown and millions upon millions of letters have been carried safely along its routes. Starting on May 15, 1918, with a line between New York and Washington, the service was added to from time to time until, in September, 1920, the air mail route extended from New York to San Francisco, a distance of 2,640 miles. This Transcontinental service has been in operation without a break up to the present time and has each year met with increasing success. At first, the service was operated only during the period of daylight—the mails proceeding at night by rail—but in 1920, a night-flying section, between Chicago and Cheyenne, was introduced whereby the mails were air-borne from start to finish with a resulting saving of time.

Until recently converted D.H. biplanes, fitted with 400 h.p. Liberty engines, were employed on the air mail service, but with the introduction of night flying, new machines, specially designed for air mail work, were obtained.

(Chicago, Ill., *via* Springfield, Ill., to St. Louis, Mo., and return), 280 miles.

C.A.M. No. 3.—National Air Transport, Inc., Chicago, Ill. (Chicago, Ill., *via* Moline, Ill., St. Joseph and Kansas City, Mo., Wichita, Kans., Oklahoma City, Okla. to Dallas and Fort Worth, Tex., and return), 1,000 miles.

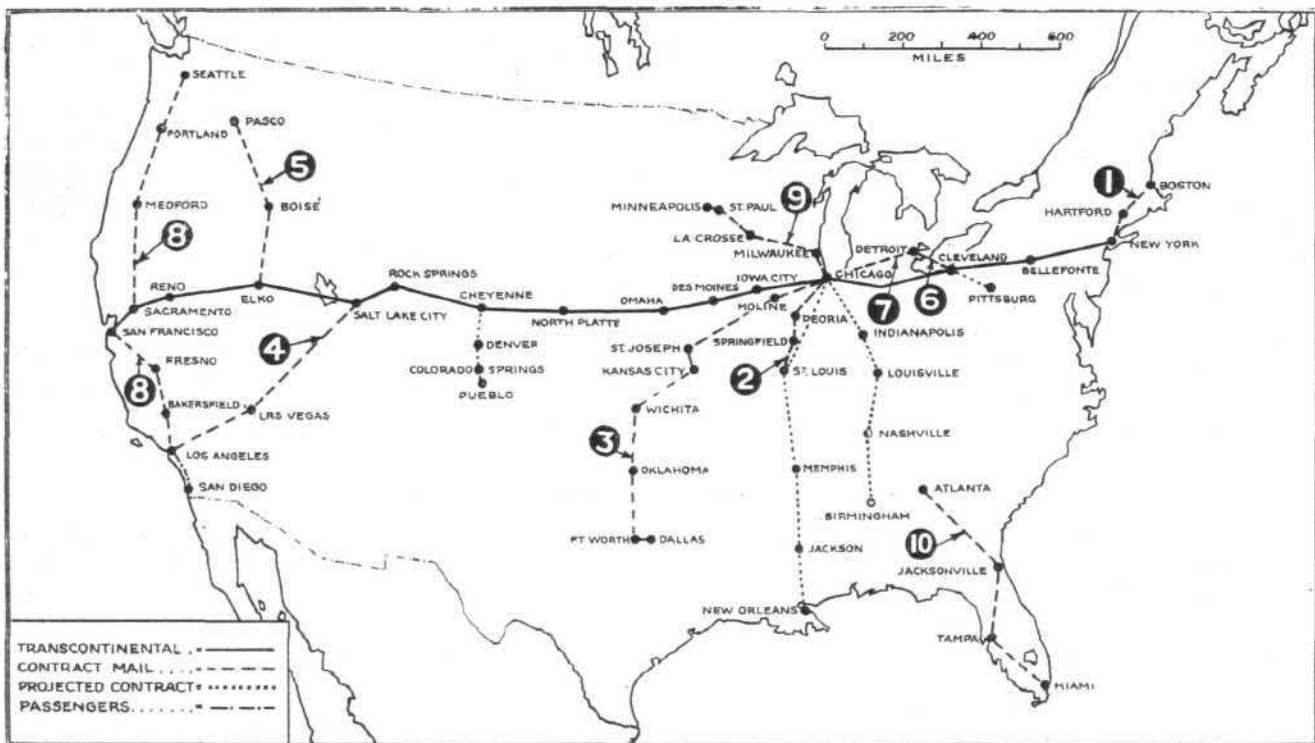
C.A.M. No. 4.—Western Air Express, Inc., Los Angeles, Calif. (Salt Lake City, Utah, *via* Las Vegas, Nev., to Los Angeles, Calif., and return), 600 miles.

C.A.M. No. 5.—Walter T. Varney, San Francisco, Calif. (Elko, Nev., *via* Boise, Idaho, to Pasco, Wash., and return), 430 miles.

C.A.M. No. 6.—Ford Motor Co., Dearborn, Mich. (Detroit, Mich., to Cleveland, Ohio, and return), 100 miles.

C.A.M. No. 7.—Ford Motor Co., Dearborn, Mich. (Detroit, Mich., to Chicago, Ill., and return), 250 miles.

C.A.M. No. 8.—Pacific Air Transport, San Francisco, Calif. (Seattle, Wash., *via* Portland and Medford, Oregon, Sacramento, San Francisco, Fresno and Bakersfield, Calif., to Los Angeles, and return), 1,080 miles.



U.S. AIR MAIL SERVICES : Sketch map of the United States, showing the Transcontinental Air Mail route now eight years old—and the ten new Contract Air Mail Routes.

We do not propose to dwell further on the Transcontinental route—full details of which have already been published in past issues of FLIGHT—but will give our readers some particulars—for which we are indebted to our American contemporary *Aviation*—of the latest developments of the U.S. Air Mail Service.

So successful has this air mail service proved, it was decided to extend air mail services in other directions. By virtue of legislation passed at the last session of Congress (popularly known as the Kelly Bill) it has been possible for the U.S. Post Office Department to enter into contracts for the transport of mail by aircraft with individuals, firms or corporations throughout the U.S.A. One of the provisions of the Department regarding contract services provided that only mail bearing postage at the rate of 10 cents per oz., or fraction thereof, would be carried.

Up to the present the P.O. Department has entered into contract with ten concerns for the handling of air mails in various parts of the States, and further contracts are under consideration. The ten new "Contract Air Mail" services, with approximate mileages, are made up as follows:—

C.A.M. No. 1.—Colonial Air Lines, Inc., Naugatuck, Conn. (Boston, Mass. *via* Hartford, Conn., to New York and return), 200 miles.

C.A.M. No. 2.—Robertson Aircraft Corp., Anglum, Mo.

C.A.M. No. 9.—Charles Dickinson, Chicago, Ill. (Chicago, Ill., *via* Milwaukee and La Crosse, Wis., to St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minn., and return), 400 miles.

C.A.M. No. 10.—Florida Airways Corp., New York (Atlanta Ga., *via* Jacksonville, Tampa and Fort Myers to Miami, Fla., and return), 450 miles.

The positions of these ten contract routes in relation to the original Transcontinental line, are shown in the accompanying sketch map. In this map, we also show a small air line between Los Angeles and San Diego. This, however, is not an air mail service, but is a very efficient passenger service which has been in operation, without Government subsidy, for over a year, and is maintained by Ryan Airlines, Inc., a very active aviation concern of 3½ years' standing. We have included it as a matter of passing interest, and we might add that Ryan Airlines, Inc., have also constructed a special type of air mail aeroplane which is being used on one of the Contract Air Mail routes—of which, more anon. Four projected contract routes are also shown: Cheyenne to Pueblo, Chicago to New Orleans, Chicago to Birmingham, and Cleveland to Pittsburgh.

In subsequent issues of FLIGHT, we shall give some brief particulars of each of the ten Contract Air Mail routes, together with illustrations of the machines employed.