

JOURNEY EAST . . .

this time quite extensive again and as we broke through the lower layer rough seas could be seen below, and a murkiness comparable with that in which we had left Lyneham.

Before putting down at Luqa, Malta, at 1515 hr we passed over the terraced island of Gonzo. From the air it appears to be cut out of an innumerable number of cardboard contours superimposed one upon the other, so sharp and clear are the terraces. At Luqa the weather was a little better, but the Maltese were glad to see the rain—the first for nearly seven months—because the water supply is always a great problem on the island.

The next day was spent at Malta, spoiling the schedule by one day, while mechanics fitted two new exhaust stubs to the starboard outer engine and checked the oil pressure in the starboard inner. This delay did, however, give the passengers an opportunity to stroll around in the warm sunshine, to admire the flowering narcissi and bougainvilleas and to watch the humming-bird moths hover over gaily coloured flowers in order to extract the nectar without actually landing—a sort of insect flight-refuelling.

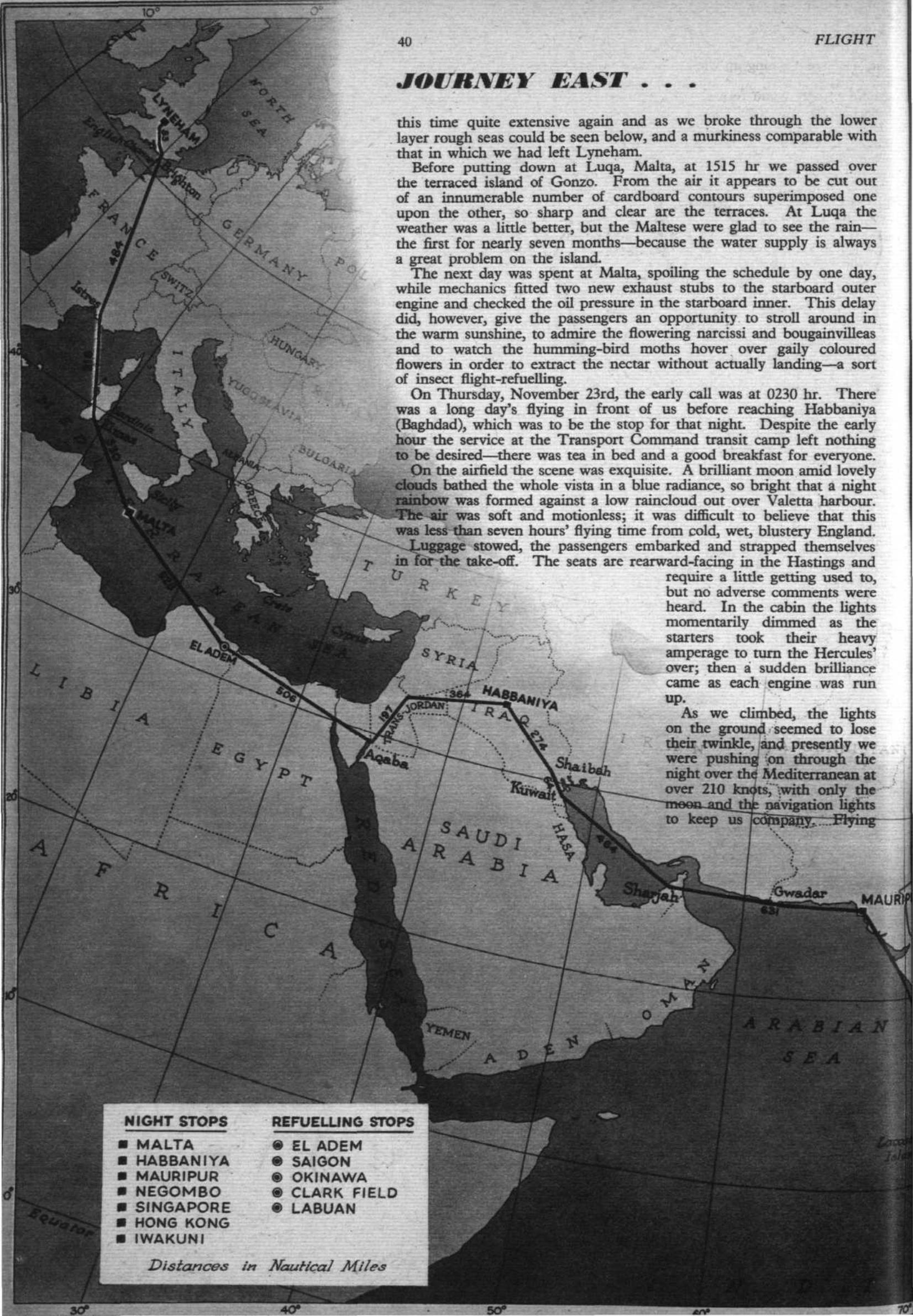
On Thursday, November 23rd, the early call was at 0230 hr. There was a long day's flying in front of us before reaching Habbaniya (Baghdad), which was to be the stop for that night. Despite the early hour the service at the Transport Command transit camp left nothing to be desired—there was tea in bed and a good breakfast for everyone.

On the airfield the scene was exquisite. A brilliant moon amid lovely clouds bathed the whole vista in a blue radiance, so bright that a night rainbow was formed against a low raincloud out over Valetta harbour. The air was soft and motionless; it was difficult to believe that this was less than seven hours' flying time from cold, wet, blustery England.

Luggage stowed, the passengers embarked and strapped themselves in for the take-off. The seats are rearward-facing in the Hastings and

require a little getting used to, but no adverse comments were heard. In the cabin the lights momentarily dimmed as the starters took their heavy amperage to turn the Hercules' over; then a sudden brilliance came as each engine was run up.

As we climbed, the lights on the ground seemed to lose their twinkle, and presently we were pushing on through the night over the Mediterranean at over 210 knots, with only the moon and the navigation lights to keep us company. Flying



NIGHT STOPS

- MALTA
- HABBANIYA
- MAURIPUR
- NEGOMBO
- SINGAPORE
- HONG KONG
- IWAKUNI

REFUELLING STOPS

- EL ADEM
- SAIGON
- OKINAWA
- CLARK FIELD
- LABUAN

Distances in Nautical Miles