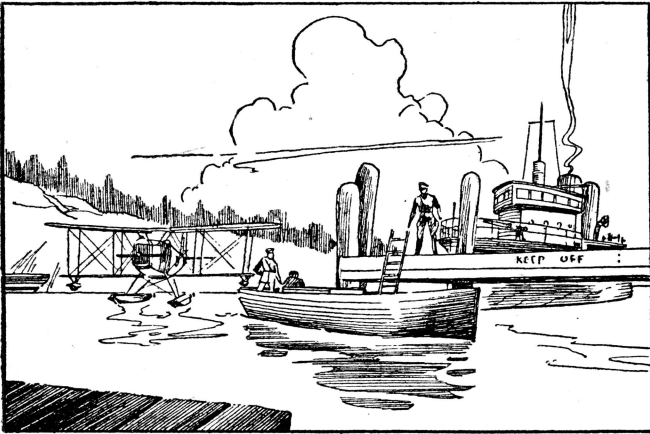


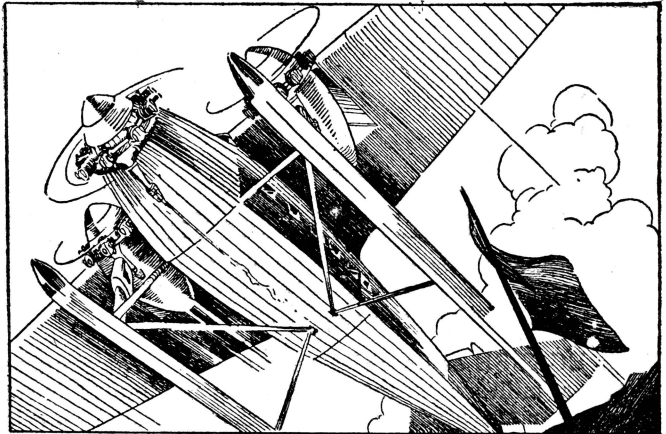
They Had What It Takes

XI—RICHARD E. BYRD—CONQUEROR OF THE POLES

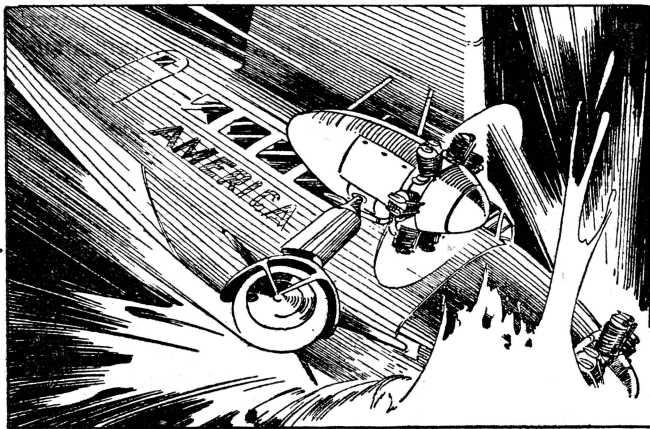
By ALDEN McWILLIAMS



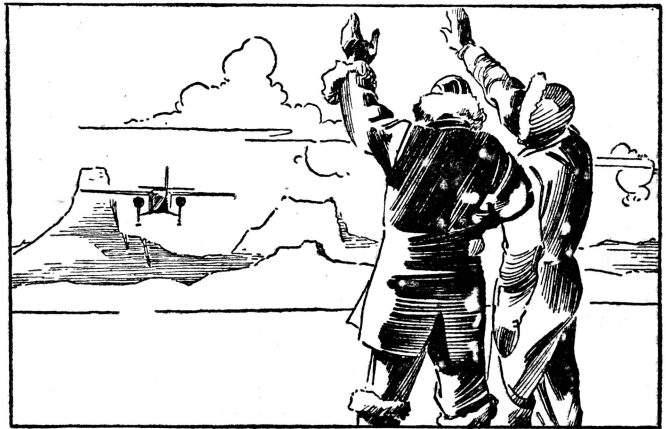
1—Born in Winchester, Va., Oct. 25, 1888, Richard Evelyn Byrd was initially educated at Virginia Military Institute and the University of Virginia. In 1912 he was graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy, and by 1916 he had attained the rank of Lieutenant-Commander. Then from 1917 until the Armistice he commanded the U.S. Air Forces training in Canada.



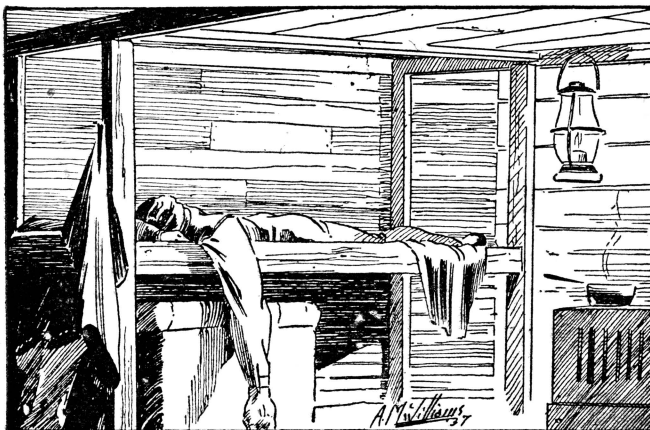
2—Gaining fame as a leader and attracted by polar work, Byrd headed the MacMillan Polar Expedition air unit in 1925. Then on May 9, 1926, with Floyd Bennett as pilot, he roared his tri-motored Fokker over the North Pole, dropping a flag in token of the achievement. Kings Bay, Spitzbergen, was the base from which this sensational 15-hour, 1360-mile flight was made.



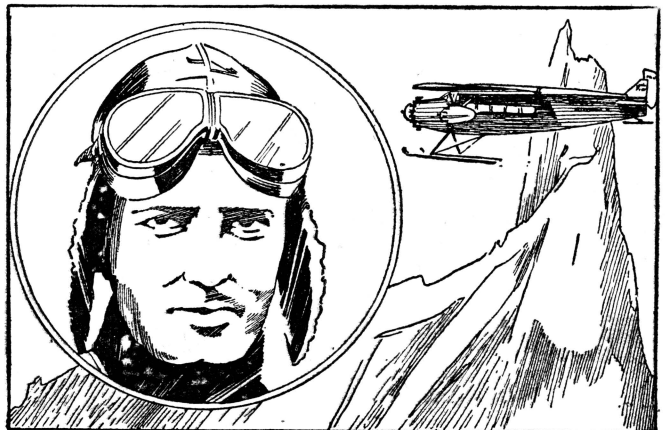
3—That memorable year 1927 saw the Virginian again poised for a stirring flight. With three companions, he nosed the Fokker *America* eastward from New York, crossed the sea handily. But fog enveloped them on the other side; and after circling blindly, they landed unhurt in the water off Ver sur Mer, France. The *America* had covered 4,200 miles (June 29—July 1).



4—Now Antarctica called, and soon Byrd was dashing southward from Little America in a Ford plane bent on attaining the South Pole. A 15,000-foot mountain range reared up, and Bernt Balchen, his pilot, only cleared it after tossing out weighty supplies. With this barrier hurtled, however, the explorer pressed on, crossed the pole on November 29, 1929.



5—In 1933, Byrd returned to Little America for two more years of Antarctic research. To conduct a special study, he voluntarily shut himself off at an advanced base and lived alone for six months. Nearly asphyxiated by a faulty stove, he chose to die rather than endanger his men in a rigorous rescue expedition. But they came for him anyway—reached him just in time.



6—Cited twenty-two times by the Navy, Richard E. Byrd is now a Rear-Admiral. He has been awarded the Hubbard Gold Medal, the Congressional Medal of Honor, the Distinguished Service Medal, and the Flying Cross. Moreover, the Republic of France has named him to the Legion of Honor. This great leader is now promoting International Peace.