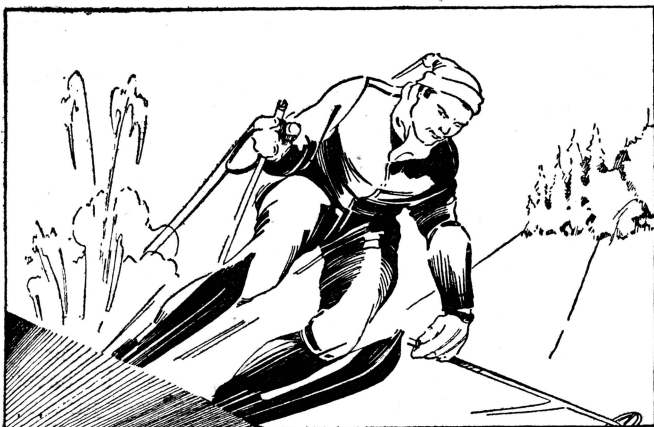


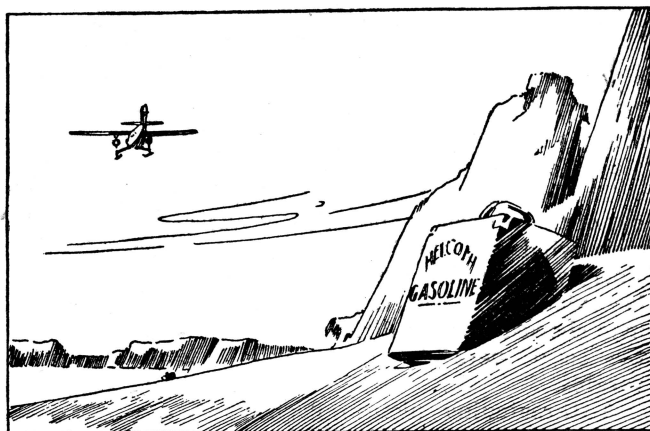
They Had What It Takes

XIII—BERNT BALCHEN—VIKING OF THE SKIES

By ALDEN McWILLIAMS



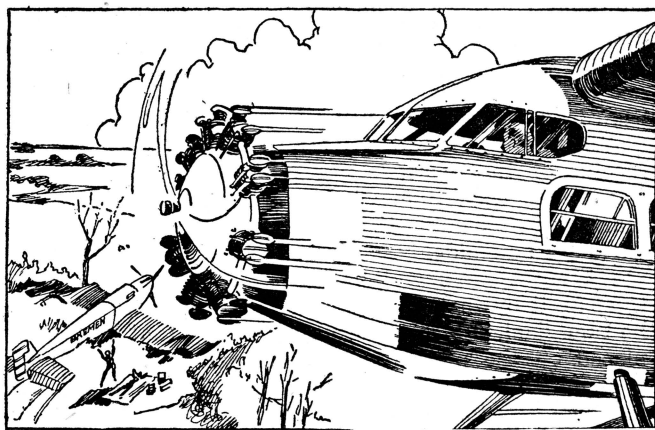
1—Bernt Balchen was born in Norway in 1899. After taking an engineering degree at Sweden's University of Haermirand, he became active in sports, winning Norway's amateur middle-weight boxing crown and some thirty ski meets as well. Then aviation called, and from 1918 until 1926 he flew with the Norwegian Air Service, attaining the rank of Flight-Lieutenant.



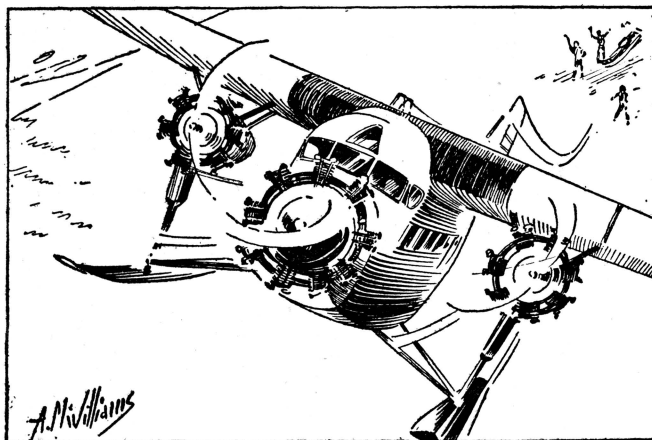
2—In 1925, this skyman of the north was a member of the party which searched for the then-lost dirigible *Norge* carrying Amundsen, Ellsworth, and Nobile over the North Pole. The following year, Balchen won world acclaim when he piloted Richard Byrd to the Pole. On this dash he ingeniously blazed his route for the return journey by dropping red-painted gas cans.



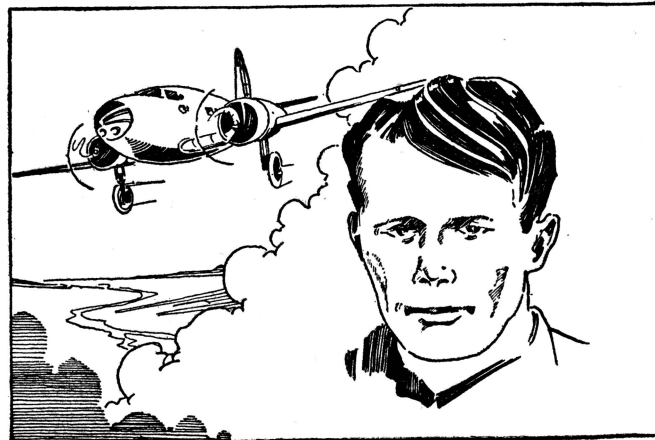
3—It was Balchen who did the lion's share of the piloting when in 1927 he flew with Byrd, Acosta, and Noville from New York to France in the Fokker *America*. On gaining the other side, the flyers circled blindly through dense fog. Then, off Ver sur Mer, France, there came a sudden glimpse of whitecaps—and they crashed into the water. Luckily all were saved.



4—Again Balchen's name made news when in 1928 Kohl, Fitzmaurice, and von Huenefeld completed the first westward crossing of the North Atlantic in the Junkers *Bremen*. After the plane was forced down in wild Labrador, Fitzmaurice fought his way to civilization. Then, with this intrepid Irish airman as his guide, Balchen flew north and rescued the two Germans.



5—Next the expert Scandinavian flyer went to Antarctica with Byrd, and in November 1928 he piloted the famed explorer over the South Pole after skilfully hurdling a 15,000-foot mountain range. Only the jettisoning of weighty supplies enabled the Ford plane to clear the lofty ridge. Then, after returning to America, Balchen became active in commercial aviation.



6—A master aero mechanic as well as a top-notch flyer, Bernt Balchen has won international renown as a first-rank all-around airman. Hailed as the "Viking of the Skies," he has been awarded the Cross of St. Olaf by the King of Norway—an honor equivalent to knighthood. And now America proudly claims this Norseman as her own, for he had become a U.S. Citizen.