

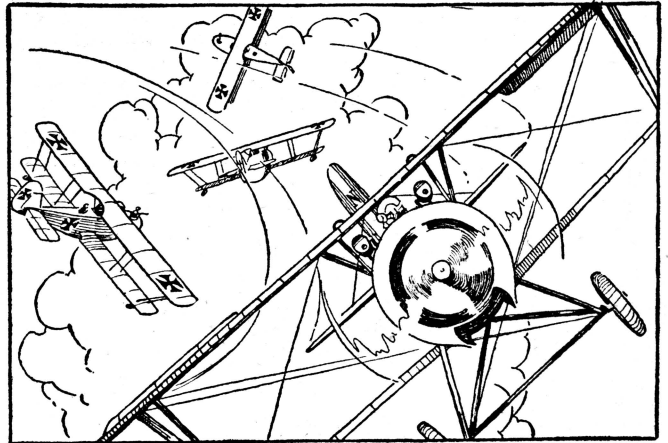
# They Had What It Takes

## XXII—JOHN ALCOCK—FIRST ATLANTIC NON-STOPPER

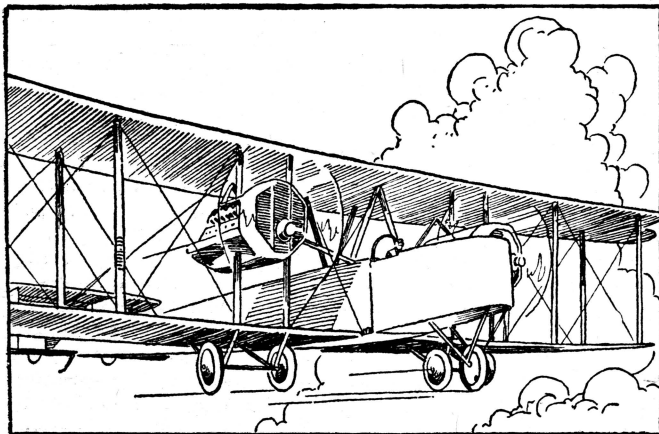
By ALDEN McWILLIAMS



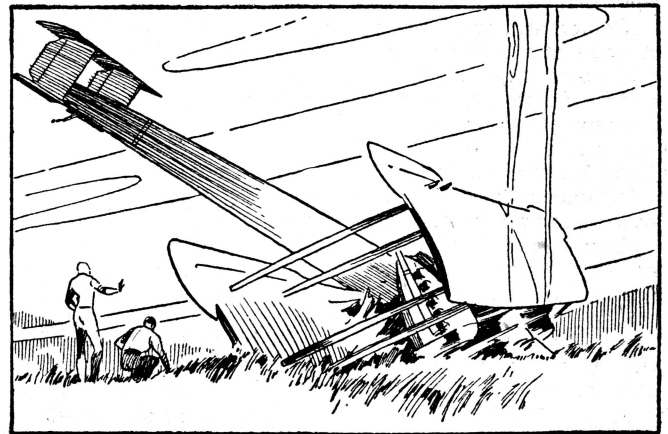
1—Born in Manchester, England, in 1892, young John Alcock, after completion of his regular schooling, became, at the age of 18, an apprentice in a motor works. Here he quickly proved himself to be a born mechanic. Then, in 1911, the fascinating new field of aviation beckoned him. He soon soloed, and in November of 1912 he was awarded his flying license.



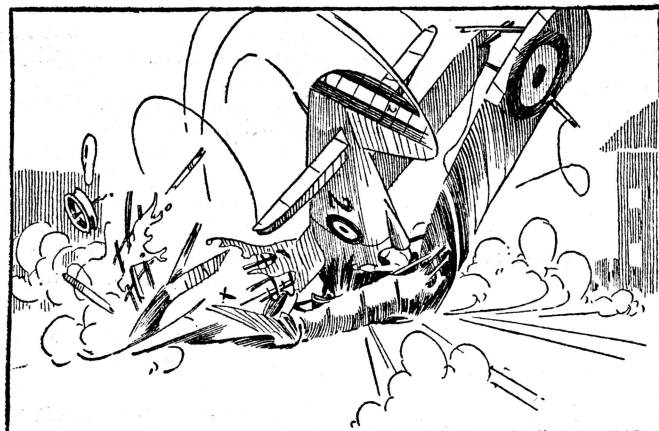
2—Using a Farman biplane for his first mount, Alcock took third in the 1914 London-Manchester air race. Then came the War, and he went to Eastchurch as an R.N.A.S. instructor. Finally, he became a flight commander on Lemnos Island, near the Dardanelles. And here he won the D.S.C. for repulsing three enemy seaplanes while flying a small single-seater.



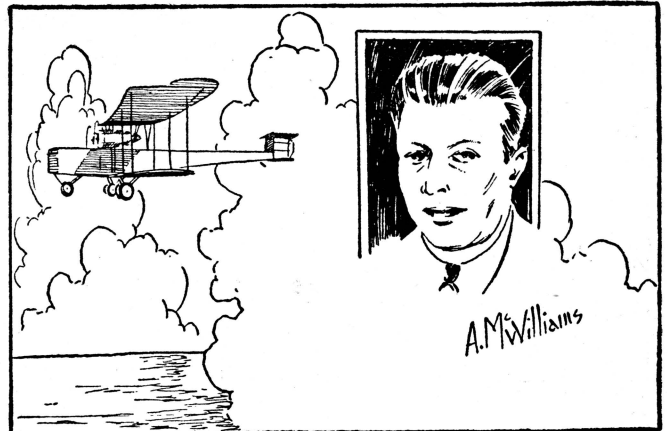
3—After leading many successful bombing raids against the Turks, the young Briton was ultimately made a prisoner, being shot down over Suvla Bay, Gallipoli. Released at the end of the War, he joined Vickers. Then he groomed a huge Vickers Vimy bomber to compete for the London *Daily Mail* prize of \$50,000 for the first non-stop trans-Atlantic hop.



4—Accompanied by Lieut. Arthur Whitten-Brown, Captain Alcock thereupon took off from Newfoundland, June 14, 1919, and bravely headed over the ocean wastes through night-palled skies. And next morning—less than 17 hours later—he arrived at Galway, Ireland! In the heavy mist, however, the Vimy crash-landed in a peat bog which had appeared to be a smooth field.



5—Immediately, the local populace cheered the flyers, neither of whom was hurt. Then the whole world resoundingly acclaimed this first non-stop conquest of the Atlantic. But shortly thereafter a sad note entered; for near Rouen, France, only six months later (December 18) Alcock again crashed in a low-visibility landing. And this time he was instantly killed.



6—And so, hardly had King George knighted him when an untimely death ended the brilliant career of this 26-year-old sky hero. But Capt. John W. Alcock's 1919 Atlantic victory remains a foremost highlight of air history, unshadowed by the deeds of later ocean flyers. Meanwhile, Whitten-Brown, who was likewise knighted, is still alive in England.