

GIRL ASKS TO ROCKET WITH CAPT. COLLINS TO THE MOON.

Commander of New York Air Police Describes his Plans for Most Fantastic Adventure Ever Conceived by Man—Gigantic Wireless Plant to Communicate With Earth After His Arrival.

New York, March 27.—"If by doing so I could get the American people back of military aviation, I'd even hop to Mars in a rocket."

This statement was jocularly made by Claude R. Collins, president of the Aviators' Club of Pennsylvania and captain of the New York City air police.

But the newspapers took his letter making the astounding offer seriously and now Captain Collins says he will have to make good—provided he is asked to do so, and it can be proved that a rocket can actually be sent to Mars—or the moon, as Prof. Robert H. Goddard, of Clark College alleges is possible.

Moreover, at least two enthusiastic kindred spirits have expressed a willingness to make the trip with Captain Collins, among them being a woman, Miss Ruth Phillips, of Kansas City, Mo.

Sharp featured, square jawed, with a wide, intelligent brow, from beneath which peer a pair of expressive blue eyes, round which a smile is incessantly breaking, Captain Collins presents that type of clean cut young American manhood which composed the American air service during the world war.

Captain Collins said:

"I made this statement to a newspaper man a few days before the report was published that I was ready to leap to Mars. It was said on the spur of the moment to denote the earnestness of my desire to make a national tour, by airplane, to arouse an interest in the dire condition of aeronautics in America. No one was more astounded than myself when I discovered the statements played up so vividly in the newspapers.

"That I have been forced to swallow unlimited chiding and even well meant insults need not be said, but as I made the statement it is one of the golden rules of life to keep one's word—if it can be done.

"Therefore, in answer to the several scientists who have questioned me I can only say that I am prepared to carry out my part of the agreement should the stipulations be fulfilled and should scientists summon me.

"I have been flooded with letters. Many want to learn how I intended to prepare for the hop, what I was going to do when I arrived on Mars and how I intended to get back.

"Young ladies, mothers, and old men have sent letters urging me not to sacrifice my life. Most of these appeals were certainly sincere. However, I am far from being tired of living, and I don't intend to sacrifice my life needlessly.

Ready to Take Risk.

"Many persons have wanted to know whether or not I have corresponded with Prof. Robert H. Goddard, the Clark College scientist, who has invented the super-rocket, which the Smithsonian Institution declares can be shot to the moon, and which others believe may be able to reach Mars, carrying within it a human being. I have not.

"If, when this rocket is tested, it landed on the moon or on Mars and communication is established with the planet, it will be up to me to live up to my word.

"The rocket which Prof. Goddard has prepared, I understand is constructed on the theory of the toy rockets with which every boy is acquainted. However, it is so arranged that the bases, caused by the explosive mixture within, would escape through a nozzle at the bottom, at the rate of 6,000 feet per second. The rocket would contain a series of explosive charges.

"To carry the rocket to the moon, 233,819 miles from the earth, at least 1,274 pounds of explosives are needed. The Smithsonian Institution's bulletin points to the possibility of filling the pose of one of those rockets with a charge of brilliant flash powder and a percussion cap, so that when it struck we should be able to see the flash.

"To my mind nothing is impossible. By this I do not mean that I believe a rocket can be shot to Mars, but I can not say it is impossible.

An Uncomfortable Speed.

"I have been forced to consider what might prove the outstanding features of such a leap. Speeding at 5,400 miles an hour through space could hardly be comfortable. As it would take some days to make the trip to Mars, it would be necessary to eat and to sleep. One must also have oxygen to breathe, as it seems assured that a complete vacuum exists beyond the limits of the earth's atmosphere.

"What sort of material could be used to stand such terrific speed without burning up or flying to bits? Another thing is the possibility of the

'bump' upon landing on Mars. "This is something to think about. But scientists assure me arrangements would be made to stop the flight of the rocket by control levers. "In actual tests Professor Goddard declares the rocket he is making has made a maximum speed of 1½ miles per second.

"He has discovered, through experimentation, that, contrary to the general opinion, the action of escaping gases would prove more effective in the vacuum existing beyond the limits of the Gocoronium of the earth than within the air composing that atmospheric blanket. This, he says, would mean even a greater speed, and with no air to cause friction the possibility of the metal being melted away would no doubt be eliminated.

Has Received Letters.

"It has been suggested that fins be placed on the forward end, or nose, of such a projectile and a valve arranged to cut off the passage of the escaping gases, so that the speed of the rocket might be decreased and possibly a safe landing made, with parachutes or other means.

"Here I wish to call attention to several letters I have received from persons who have offered to make a similar leap or to 'go with me.' Among these, the most interesting are the offers of Captain Charles N. Fitzgerald, a flier from Texas, now living in New York, and Miss Ruth Phillips, a young woman of Kansas City, Mo.

"Captain Fitzgerald is so thoroughly interested that he has called and volunteered his willingness to proceed, accompany or follow me in a rocket.

"From his statement, Mr. Fitzgerald seems confident he could complete such a leap. He has performed a long list of feats, such as jumping

off cliffs, diving from one of the New York bridges, walking across the Hudson river, treading water, carrying three oranges in his hands. In one of his aerial feats he says he stands on the top wing of an airplane while the pilot loops the loop. This seems to be impossible, but he declares the force caused by the speed of the machine holds his feet solidly on the machine.

"Captain Fitzgerald is now recovering from an accident he sustained on December 8, when he made a jump of 40 feet from a tree to a running automobile, breaking both feet, one leg, two ribs and spraining his back.

"This man has some really surprising ideas. One reason why I credit them is that he stands ready at all times to prove his sincerity.

"Scientists have agreed for years that life exists on Mars," he told me. "This being true, human beings should be found there. If that proved true, it would be quite simple to establish there some sort of communication known to this world."

"We fliers have a general idea of the rudiments of electricity. Why, then, would it not be possible to arrange a great wireless plant on Mars to establish communication with the earth?"

"Strange things have been accomplished in our age. The impossible is being done every day, and no educated, free thinking man will admit anything is impossible. Unlike Captain Fitzgerald, I am not impatiently awaiting the chance to step into the rocket, but should I be called upon to keep my word I should do so."

Captain Collins is a keen minded young business man, about 35 years of age.

Besides heading the largest fliers' club in the world, Captain Collins was commissioned in the New York air police.

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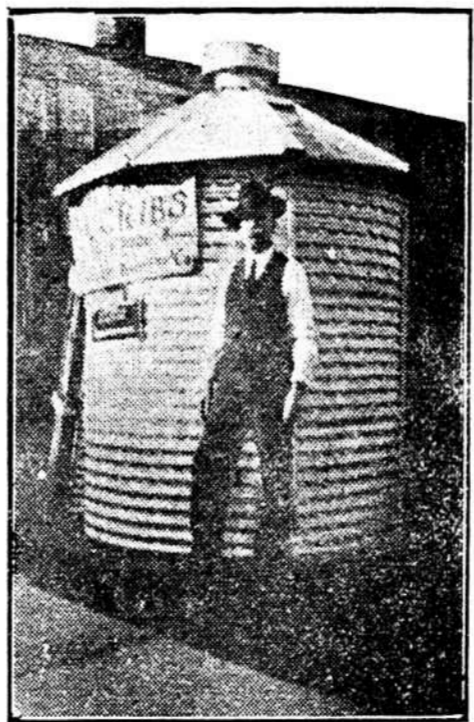
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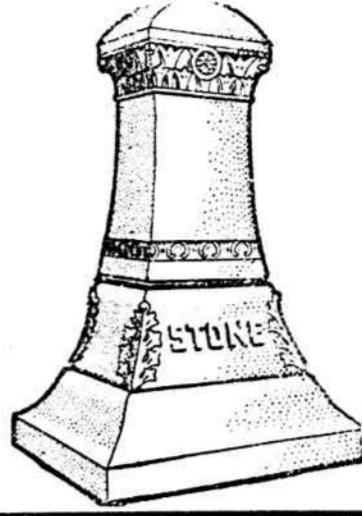
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