

President Feels At Home Aboard Plane On Long Flights for Official Business

Editor's note: Dwight D. Eisenhower has made many flying trips to many parts of the world, both as a five-star general in war and chief executive in peace. This week he returns to Europe on a mission of peace in neutral Switzerland. It may be one of the most important journeys of his career. In the following dispatch U. P. White House Reporter Merriman Smith gives intimate details of the President's life aboard the big plane he uses for official flights.

By MERRIMAN SMITH
United Press White House Writer
Washington—(U.P.)—President Eisenhower will step from a black limousine sometime around 6:30 p.m. (EST) Friday, cast an appraising eye at the bayoneted troops on guard duty, then stride quickly up an Air Force ramp to the entrance of his giant aircraft, The Columbine III.

With a wave of his hat, he will disappear behind a heavy door bearing the presidential seal. Lt. Col. William Draper, the President's pilot and Air Force aide, will start the plane's red, white, and blue propellers.

And within minutes, the powerful engines of the Super-Constellation will send her roaring down the runway and into the air toward Geneva and the Big Four conference.

Mr. Eisenhower, most air-minded of America's presidents, has flown about 75,000 miles since taking office. By the time he wings over the Atlantic to Europe and returns to Washington later this month he will have added another 6000 miles to his flight record.

The flight to Geneva, excluding the time required for at least one fueling stop on the way, will take about 15½ flying hours. His longest air trip was in 1952 shortly before his inauguration when he flew to Korea.

When Mr. Eisenhower boards the huge White House plane for a long trip, here is what the journey is like inside the ship: The President goes first to his own cabin, which he will share with Mrs. Eisenhower on this trip. There he shucks his coat and hands it to a flight steward. He may slip on a sweater. Then he fastens the seat belt attached to a comfortable club chair and awaits the takeoff.

Once under way and in level flight, the President will chat with the first lady and then may

move to a small desk by his cabin window and work on official papers and correspondence brought along by his personal secretary, Mrs. Ann Whitman.

There is not much to look at on an overseas flight—moonlight or daylight—and the President spends little time gazing out of the window even over land unless there is attractive scenery below. Once he tires of working, he likes to walk through the plane, stopping to say hello to everyone aboard.

When guests or non-staff travelers are on the ship, he spends a few minutes chatting with each. He also visits the flight bridge where Draper presides over a highly trained crew.

Depending on the pressure of business, there may be a steady flow of important messages to and from the plane as it cruises along at altitudes of from 15,000 to more than 20,000 feet. The plane carries a radio teletype which can send and receive through Army network relay systems to and from almost any point in the world.

If a cabinet member back in Washington has an urgent message for the President while Mr. Eisenhower is aloft, he calls Sherman Adams, the assistant to the President, or some other key White House official and asks that the information be relayed.

If the message is of a confidential or security nature, it is dispatched in code via radio teletype. The President may be reached by radio telephone, but these conversations cannot be shielded from other listeners on the same frequency. This precludes transmitting security information by voice.

The Columbine also carries radio wireless facilities for the President. This type of sending and receiving equipment is not subject to atmospheric interference as much as the radio teletype and telephone. The teletype chatters away much of the time when the plane is in flight, transmitting messages for members of the traveling staff and frequently sending ahead instructions to White House representatives where the plane will land. The teletype is tested at least once an hour to be sure it is

working efficiently.

The presidential menu depends largely on the duration of the trip. For the long haul to Geneva, Draper will contract with a commercial airline kitchen before departure to put aboard at least one hot meal for all members of the party. The President's favorite flying food is steak and potatoes. Airlines can supply this.

The plane also carries a sizable galley, complete with a three-burner electric stove, an oven, toaster, grill, refrigerator, and two hot water heaters for making coffee, tea, and cocoa.

The galley is used primarily for preparing snacks. On most occasions the only meal prepared aboard in its entirety is breakfast which runs from orange juice to ham and eggs.

Sandwiches, platters of fresh fruit, and triangles of cheese are carried on most flights for between-meals snacks. Mr. Eisenhower likes to nibble on cheese while reading.

After dinner, the President may try to organize a bridge game in his cabin. When players are scarce he turns instead to his favorite western magazines which the staff has learned to have aboard on all trips.

On an overnight flight, the President likes to turn in early. He sleeps fairly well on a plane, but not as soundly as he would on the ground. His cabin has two daybeds or couches which make up into beds at night.

The staff or guest section of the plane can be converted quickly into eight Pullman-type berths, four uppers and four lowers. There also are four bunks forward of the galley for the crew and secret service agents in Mr. Eisenhower's immediate party, plus some seats which do not convert into bunks in the staff's lounge section of the ship.

Following long custom, Mr. Eisenhower likes to be first off the ship when it lands, making exception for the two air police who usually speed down the ramp to take guard duty positions before Mr. Eisenhower emerges. When he takes off he usually is the last man up the

main ramp.

The ship carries a self-contained, automatic ramp forward of the wings on the port side. This is used by secret service men and staff members who leave the ship unobtrusively while the President is being accorded welcome honors.

The President is a confirmed air traveler at home as well as abroad. Much to the sorrow of the railroads, he almost never goes anywhere by train. The only other means of transportation used frequently by Mr. Eisenhower is the automobile. He has traveled in the neighborhood of 5,000 miles by auto since his inauguration.



'BEST MAN IN CABINET' — In Washington, President Eisenhower bids goodbye to Oveta Culp Hobby after she resigned as secretary of health, education and welfare. The Chief Executive characterized her as "the best man in my cabinet."

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