

From North Shore, a flight of nostalgia

An aviator and a movie star will take a romantic page from Long Island's aviation history when they take off from Manhasset Bay tomorrow in a giant antique seaplane for a 20-hour flight to Ireland. **Charles Blair**, who flew the first nonstop, transatlantic flight by seaplane in 1942 to inaugurate a regular passenger route between the United States and Great Britain, will pilot a British-built Short Sandringham "flying boat." Among the passengers will be his wife, actress **Maureen O'Hara**. Port Washington was the U.S. terminal for the transatlantic air service until the flying boats were replaced by land-based craft after World War II. At 6 tonight, when Blair is scheduled to arrive in the plane from his home in St. Croix, Virgin Islands, he will receive a commemorative plaque from North Hempstead Town Supervisor **Michael J. Tully Jr.** at the Port Washington Town Dock.

Blair, a retired Pan American Airlines captain, now operates a Virgin Island-based amphibious air service. He won the Distinguished Flying Cross for leading the first nonstop transatlantic flight of jet fighters. On the flight to Ireland, he will be accompanied by **Kelly Rogers**, **Winston Churchill's** Royal Air Force pilot, and **John Grier-son**, who set up Britain's air transport system during World War II, and an Upper Brookville couple, **Gene J.** and **Shirley Neville**, whose St. Croix home is near the **Blairs'**. The craft will stop in Newfoundland to refuel before the aviator and the movie star—and their friends—fly off again into the sunrise.

Newsday (Nassau Edition)

May 31, 1977

Newsday / 20 CENTS
TUESDAY
MAY 31, 1977
THE LONG ISLAND NEWSPAPER • NASSAU EDITION



A Time for Reflection

After Memorial Day ceremonies, two life and death camp survivors walk among the graves at Pinelevé.
Page 4



The loudest screams come from motorists whose auto insurance bills have risen astronomically. But there is more than that to the growing insurance crisis. Among the fundamental questions is that of fairness: Should a motorist's age count for more than driving record? A series starts today.
Part II

Suffolk Phone Tap
Trips Up Escapee
From Matteawan
Page 5

Clerks' Strike Ends
With a Free Day For
45,647 at Belmont
Sports Section

Newsday (Nassau Edition)

June 1, 1977

Newsday 20 CENTS
WEDNESDAY
THE LONG ISLAND NEWSPAPER • NASSAU EDITION JUNE 1, 1977



A car pursued by police crashed into a motorcycle, killing a man and woman. It was the second fatal accident involving a police chase since a Nassau police officer was run down Sunday. *Page 5*

**Air Official
Had Free Ride
On Concorde**
Page 4

**Job Seniority
Gets Supreme
Court Support**
Page 3

**Why Drivers
Are Risking
No Insurance**
Part II

Blair is left in wreckage. At right, Larry Tronzo, charged with manslaughter.

The Past Drifts Back From a Cloudless Sky

By Sylvia Moreno

Port Washington—Almost 35 years ago, Charles Blair piloted one of the last transatlantic flights of a huge Pan American Clipper ship—a "flying boat"—out of Manhasset Bay.

Last night, the retired Air Force brigadier general returned to Long Island, circled the cloudless sky above the bay in his personal "boat" and touched down on a watery airstrip bordered by dozens of yachts and sailboats.

Just as they did in the late 1930s and early 1940s, the crowds gathered along the North Hempstead Town dock to await Blair's four-engine S-25 seaplane. Back then, flying was a novelty—almost everybody who went overseas traveled there by ship. Today, transatlantic travel by ship has decreased considerably and jumping onto a jumbo jet for a destination abroad is commonplace.

But nostalgia was the rule last night. Some came to greet Blair and remind him that they used to serve him in local stores or banks when he lived in Manhasset and Port Washington during the 1940s and early 1950s. Others came to see Blair's actress wife, Maureen O'Hara, whose hair and accent are strong reminders of her Irish heritage. And, as one spectator said, "I remember when I was a kid, sitting out here for hours, just to see those flying boats come and go."

North Hempstead Town Supervisor Michael J. Tully and the Port Washington Chamber of Commerce presented Blair with plaques commemorating the event.

Blair, who flew into Manhasset Bay from his

home in St. Croix, V.I., was scheduled to fly the four-engine British-built Sandringham today for Lake Derg, Ireland. Now retired from Pan Am, Blair laughingly declined to give his age. "I'll just say I've been around a long time. I've been flying for 49 years, so take it from there—but I started when I was a kid."

He remembers flying into Manhasset Bay when the traffic was much lighter—"it was easier to maneuver then"—but the landing was more difficult—"it took more ingenuity." In the old days, before the construction of marine terminals such as the one at LaGuardia Airport, he said pilots had to construct their own landing strips on the water. That was when Blair tested the first U.S.-United Kingdom commercial route by flying a Catalina seaplane across the Atlantic. He later won the Distinguished Flying Cross for leading the first nonstop transatlantic flight of jet fighters and won the Harmon Trophy for flying a P-51 solo across the North Pole.

The seaplane in which Blair and his party of 21 will fly to Ireland was built in 1943. Only two Sandringhams are known to be still flying and Blair owns them both. They're slow, flying about 180 MPH at 8,000 feet, but he and Miss O'Hara said they wouldn't trade them for a 747 which cruises at 600 MPH at an altitude of 30,000 feet.

The actress, who first flew a seaplane 10 years ago when she married Blair, said she felt very safe and comfortable on the craft. "You're not flying so high that all you see is soapuds underneath you, and that's all you can see from a jet," she said. "You're flying in that area between God and the wonderful land he created."



Photo by W. Douglas Hanewinkel

Blair and Miss O'Hara on Port Washington Dock