



SELLING ON THE WING

Tea and crumpets were out. The Marconi Viking was being prepared for the German flight. On the tarmac she stood dripping in the dank mist of a November Sunday afternoon, her silver fuselage glistening red and blue as it reflected the air terminal lights. The rear door was open and drawn up near it were two Marconi brakes. Engineers were at work and a power generator roared under the nose.

In the passenger cabin of that aircraft was a special array of our new Sixty Series airborne equipment, as complete an installation, including doppler, as has been fitted in any aircraft, and here also we found the two engineers who had already arrived: Ken Watkins, leader of Aeronautical Division's flying demonstration tour of Germany, and Mike Thornton, who had installed all the communications radio and would demonstrate it. They were to take off early the next morning and were now going over all the details, making their

last checks. Ken was thumbing through reams of necessary paperwork and handed us a sheet. It showed the tightly packed schedule of demonstration flights to take place during the following ten days at different airports in Germany. This was a business trip indeed, the first time out with the Viking re-equipped with the Sixty Series.

The Captain arrived and with him Freddie Farrell, Deputy Service Manager, Aeronautical Division. The aeroplane filled with people. Flying preparations—flight plan—briefing—Customs—take-off—'We move from here at 8.45 in the morning,' said Captain Townsend, 'Customs must be cleared first. Take-off should be at 9 a.m. It takes ten minutes to run-up.' And with his genial thumbs-up the change was made from preparation to flight readiness, and the stamp was set on the job ahead.

There was dirty weather over the North Sea next morning. The sky was inky black and thickening

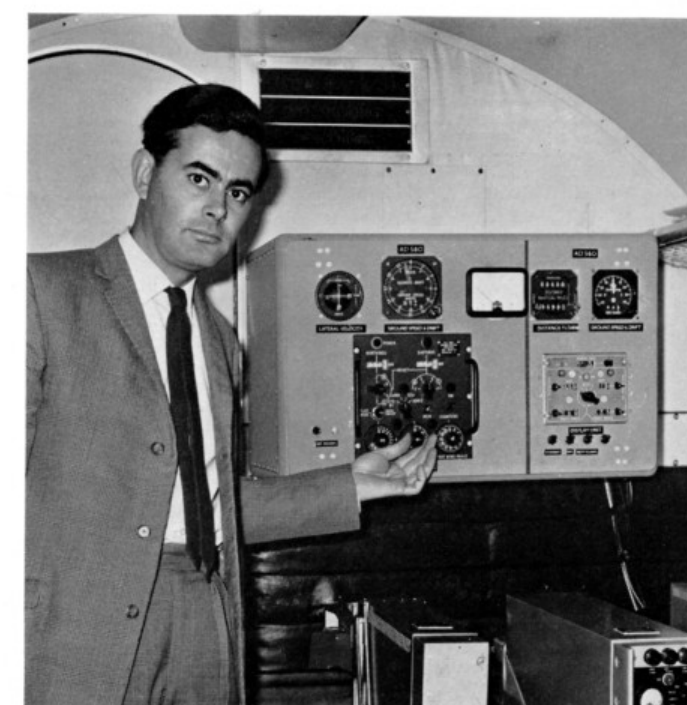
LEFT: Captain Vic Townsend, pilot of the Marconi Viking, at the controls. ABOVE: The Viking taking off from Southend Airport in dirty weather on her way to Germany for a ten days' sales tour. Marconi Sixty Series equipment is installed in her

BELOW: Ken Watkins, sales engineer, Aeronautical Division, who led the Marconi team, with the doppler installations. His hand is on the control of the new AD580 for helicopters, and on the right is the AD560 for high-speed aircraft

green over the airport. 'We'll be going through it,' said First Officer Nedoma, jerking his thumb to the perimeter as he left Control, 'we're bound for Hamburg.' Through it. He was right.

A tractor grabbed the Viking by the tail and trailed it inert to the apron. The party paddled over the tarmac and climbed in: the Skipper and First Officer appeared in the cockpit, and the airscrews began to thrash into activity. Thumbs up!

There was a long wait at the start of the runway, almost as though there had been second thoughts in the control tower about the fitness of the weather. Driving rain stung the eyes of two Marconi 'ground staff' cowering behind a fire appliance at the edge of the runway waiting to pot a picture. Then with a roar she came, and, lifting, passed overhead into the murk. Out of sight now, Captain Vic Townsend was certainly going through it, blind. This surely was a demonstration flight! If ever airline chiefs should have seen our 'hardware' in action this was the occasion, because the navigator, First Officer Nedoma, had at his command two separate





Aboard the Viking to see the team off to Germany was F. Farrell, Deputy Service Manager, Aeronautical Division, left, with Mike Thornton, installation engineer



The captain arrives and makes his final checks. Captain V. J. Townsend, centre, with F. Farrell, right, and Miss Erica Beck, air hostess

installations of both navigation and communications equipment: the aircraft's own installation, a type already in use with airlines of the world, and the new series, including doppler, which must help to earn our income in the future.

The Viking thrust her way, cloud-sheathed, over the North Sea. Blips on control radar-screens kept count of her. Meanwhile we splashed our way to Basildon to talk to the engineers who had played a part in the launching of this trip.

'Months of work go into preparing a flight like this', said Freddie Farrell. 'Technical Services Group are responsible for administering the aircraft, and for bringing it into service when required, in liaison with Airwork from whom it is hired. We supervised the fitting-out work at Hurn', he said, 'where the aircraft is hangered, so that it was ready for the installation of the radio equipment when it was brought to Southend. Captain Townsend is commissioned for us by Airwork. Though he runs his own business, he flies for us pretty well when we want him. There's a lot of work for the pilots, too', he continued. 'All this rain might upset our programme. Even in the air the crews may discover that the airfield at their destination is unserviceable, and must have alternative plans laid which can be set in operation from the air. All the bookings were made in advance and Gay Jangda at Basildon as well as Pat Honey of Airwork gave us invaluable assistance with this.' He glanced at his

watch. 'They should be there by now', he said, and we talked of the methods by which Captain Townsend would make a landing. The radio compass would bring him within range of Hamburg instrument landing system, and he would go in down the glide path, keeping the aircraft on course by watching the vertical and horizontal track lines of his instruments until he sighted the runway.

Freddie Farrell took us along to see G. E. Beck, Chief Engineer, Aeronautical Division (ANAD), who is the pioneer of doppler, first for the Services, then the civil airlines, and now for helicopters. 'During development, the civil type doppler was flown for a number of hours in the Viking', he told us. 'The development boys, Ray Walls and his team, regard the Viking as one of their main tools. Captain Townsend greatly contributed to its success', he continued, 'because of his Job-like patience in flying given courses time and time again. He feels very much a part of the Marconi team. The equipment is in production now, and has been selected by B.O.A.C. for tests. They are giving it a thousand hours' exhaustive flying trial.'

The demonstrations in Germany had been arranged by Sales Section in close connection with our German agents Kirchfeld Aerotechnik of Düsseldorf. Names like Heinkel, Dornier, Luft-hansa appeared on the appointments list, starting from Hamburg-Fuhlsbeittel and ending at Oberpfaffenhofen.



Final fitting and preparation of communications equipment in the Viking. Mike Thornton, right, installed it and was ably assisted by Roy Mitchell, apprentice



Mike Thornton with Sixty Series equipment he installed in the Viking. On his control panel are, bottom left, AD722, ADF controller, left to right top, AD722 bearing indicator, compass repeater, VOR/ILS marker indicator lamps and control switch, AD360 ADF bearing indicator. Centre bottom, AD360 controller, and right, AD160 communications, and AD260 VHF navigation controllers

The Marconi party going aboard the Viking for Germany. Left to right, Mike Thornton, Ken Watkins, Captain Townsend, Eric Walker, doppler development engineer, Miss Beck, and First Officer Nedoma

