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NEWS BUREAU • RYAN AERONAUTICAL COMPANY

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AIR FORCE PROJECT "SOIAS" TESTS RYAN NAVIONS IN COLD-WEATHER OPERATION

SPECIAL COLD-WEATHER OPERATIONS WITH THREE RYAN NAVION SUPER 260'S WILL BE CONDUCTED BY THE AIR FORCE THIS WINTER FROM A CANADIAN BASE TO OBTAIN SKI DESIGN CRITERIA AND DETERMINE THE MOST EFFECTIVE USE OF AIRPLANE SKIS IN A WIDE RANGE OF SNOW AND ICE CONDITIONS.

MODIFICATION OF THE PLANES, INCLUDING INSTALLATION OF HEATERS AND INSTRUMENTS TO RECORD SKI DATA, HAS BEEN EFFECTED IN THE ENGINEERING SHOPS OF WRIGHT AIR DEVELOPMENT CENTER OF WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, DAYTON, OHIO. TEST WILL CENTER ON THE UTILIZATION OF THE WHEEL REPLACEMENT SKI.

FOR PROJECT "SOIAS" -- SLIDING ON ICE AND SNOW -- THE WINTERIZED SUPER 260'S WILL OPERATE IN A 300-MILE RADIUS CENTERING AT KENORA, ONTARIO, IN THE LAKE OF THE WOODS COUNTRY JUST ABOVE THE CANADIAN BORDER ALMOST DUE NORTH OF MINNEAPOLIS. A NORTHROP YC-125 AND A DOUGLAS C-47 WILL BE USED IN SUPPORT OF THE PROJECT.

FLIGHTS BEGIN LATE THIS FALL AND WILL CONTINUE THROUGH APRIL, 1952. THEY WILL IN EFFECT BE AN EXTENSION OF A SIMILAR PROJECT CONDUCTED DURING THE WINTER OF 1950-51, WHEN SKI INSTALLATIONS WERE TESTED ON NAVION L-17B AIRCRAFT AT YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORY, CANADA.

THE NAVION SUPER 260 COMMERCIAL PLANE IS A LATER MODEL THAN THE L-17B MILITARY LIAISON TYPE. FLIGHT TEST DIVISION CREWS THAT WERE ON THE PREVIOUS PROJECT HAVE BEEN REASSIGNED TO THE NAVION "SOIAS" OPERATION.

THE 1950-51 TESTS SHOWED THAT THE NAVION WAS WELL ADAPTED TO SKI OPERATION BECAUSE THE NOSE SKI CAN BE READILY LIFTED OUT OF THE SNOW TO GIVE THE POSITIVE ANGLE OF ATTACK NECESSARY TO ACCOMPLISH TAKEOFF.

WITH ITS NORMAL WHEEL LANDING GEAR, THE NAVION HAS DEMONSTRATED ABILITY TO OPERATE UNDER SEVERE CONDITIONS OF SNOW, MUD AND SLUSH DURING WINTER MONTHS. A TYPICAL NAVION WINTER OPERATION HAS BEEN THE TRANSPORT OF PARTS AND SUPPLIES TO THE SNOW-COVERED 6500-FOOT ALTITUDE MOUNTAIN FIELD OF THE YELLOW PINE MINE AT STIBNITE, IN THE PRIMITIVE AREA OF IDAHO.

ANOTHER PRIVATELY OWNED NAVION, DURING THE SEVERE BLIZZARDS OF 1948-49, AT ALLIANCE, NEBRASKA, ASSISTED AIR FORCE "AIRLIFTS" UNDER CONDITIONS WHERE SNOW DEPTHS WERE FROM TWO TO 20 FEET, WIND VELOCITIES WERE OFTEN ABOVE 60 MILES AN HOUR, AND VISIBILITY WAS NEAR-ZERO, REQUIRING THE PILOT, EDWARD KOOPER, TO FIND HIS WAY BACK TO THE AIRPORT BY FOLLOWING RANCH FENCE LINES.

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