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"CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA" COMPLETES MAIDEN FLIGHT TO TT

SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS, TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS, (MARCH 23)...The recently purchased second Trust Territory DC-4 aircraft, which has been named the "Congress of Micronesia" in honor of the first territorial legislature, completed its inaugural flight to the Trust Territory when it called at Truk, Kwajalein, and Majuro last week.

During its maiden flight to Truk on March 15, Acting Speaker of the Congress of Micronesia's General Assembly Petrus Mailo officially christened the "Congress of Micronesia" by splashing green coconut water on the aircraft nose minutes after she touched down at Moen Airport for the first time. A similar "baptismal ceremony" was also conducted at Yap Airport on March 11, when Miss Mary Berngun, a high school student, poured fresh coconut water on the plane's nose wheel to give the "Congress of Micronesia" a Yapese traditional blessing. In addition to Acting Speaker Mailo, President of the House of Delegates Tosiwo Nakayama and six other members of the Congress of Micronesia were on hand at Moen Airport to welcome the plane's crew and some 40 passengers. Throng estimated at nearly 1,000 crowded the terminal to witness the maiden flight.

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The other members of the Congress, some of whom were passengers on the DC-4 maiden flight, who took part in the ceremonies at Truk were Bailey Olter, Vice President of the House of Delegates and Delegate Eliuel Pretrick, both of Ponape; Delegate Isaac Ianwi of the Marshalls; Delegate Andon Amaraich of Truk, and members of General Assembly Soukichi Fritz and Mitaro Danis, both of Truk.

Led by Mrs. Tosiwo Nakayama and Mrs. Nick Bossy, first Trukese women ever elected to the Truk District Legislature, a group of colorfully clad ladies of the Trukese-American Women's Association decked the alighting passengers with leis. The music of the Truk High School Choir and Band and the Xavier High School Band, coupled with the balmy weather and the outgoing good humor of the large crowd, put the affair triumphantly in the gala class.

Speeches were given by Truk District Administrator Alan M. MacQuarrie, Acting Speaker Mailo, and President Nakayama during the ceremonies. "Chief Petrus," as he is commonly known, thanked the Trust Territory Administration for providing the new plane. Both District Administrator MacQuarrie and President Nakayama, in different ways, said that the "Congress of Micronesia," like the legislative body from which it took its name, would help bring Micronesians closer together--culturally and commercially as well as physically. As a token of good luck, the plane's crew was presented with replicas of Trukese "devil masks," which were used in olden days in the Mortlocks to protect dwellings and canoes from evil spirits and high winds.

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Bishop Vincent I. Kennally gave the new plane a safety blessing, while Rev. Paul Marshalls, Principal of the MIZPAH High School in Truk, gave the benediction.

Among those aboard the "Congress of Micronesia's" maiden flight to Truk was Mr. Dave Boyer, Foreign Staff of the National Geographic Magazine, who will spend the next two or three months in the Trust Territory gathering photographs and impressions for an article on Micronesia.

Continuing its maiden flight to the Marshalls, the "Congress of Micronesia" cruised uneventfully on its five-hour longest hop, arriving in Kwajalein late evening of March 15. It remained there overnight and proceeded the following morning to Majuro, Marshalls District Center.

At Kwajalein, District Administrator Dwight Heine, who had just returned from a meeting in Honolulu, and residents of Kwajalein were at the airport to welcome the new plane with beautiful garlands of Marshallese flowers, with which they decorated the interior of the plane.

Upon arrival at the Majuro International Airport on the morning of March 16, another large crowd of local dignitaries, members of Marshalls Women's Clubs, Boy Scouts, and school students were on hand at the airport to greet the crew and the passengers, who included their District Administrator Heine. Flower leis prepared by the Marshalls Women's Associations and Clubs were presented to the crew members and passengers, and the aircraft itself was extensively decorated, both inside and outside. A long garland made of coconut fronds, signifying copra as the most important crop of the Territory, was placed under the

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airplane's belly, and Father Hacker and Reverend Daughtry blessed the aircraft. District Administrator Heine then welcomed the new aircraft and its crew members to Majuro. Marshalls members of the Congress of Micronesia Atlan Anien and Henry Samuel made speeches in which they expressed their gratitude to the Trust Territory Government for improving air service in Micronesia. This was followed by a few remarks made by Capt. Oakes, who invited the people aboard for a guided inspection tour inside the aircraft. The crew members of the maiden flight to the Marshalls were given locally made shirts in memento of the inaugural flight. The shirts were made specially for the occasion, with Pan American insignia sewn on the pocket and the first name of each crew member embroidered just above the pocket. The words "Maiden Flight" were also embroidered.

The "Congress of Micronesia" returned to Guam March 16 late afternoon, thus completing its inaugural flights to all districts of the Trust Territory, except Ponape, whose airfield is currently under construction.