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By 116 NARS, Date 8-29-67

File A21

382

CONFIDENTIAL

UNITED STATES FLEET
AIRCRAFT, BASE FORCE
U. S. S. WRIGHT, Flagship

11/rlt (0)

San Diego, California,

NOV 29 1936

From: Commander Aircraft, Base Force.
To: Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet.
Via: Commander Base Force.

Subject: Amelia Earhart, round-the-world flight of.

Reference: (a) OpNav Conf. letter Op-38-E-EMR (SC) A21-5 serial 4274 Doc.No. 7848 of 11 November 1936.
(b) CinCus Conf. letter A21/5580 of 19 November 1936 with Combasefor Conf. 1st indorsement A21/4617 of 20 November 1936.

1. The model PBY-1 airplane lends itself to the refueling uses discussed in the inclosure to reference (a), since no additional tank need be installed, convenient drain outlets are available for attaching fueling hoses, and a bottom hatch, designed for a rear tunnel gun mount, is available through which the hose (s) may be lowered and controlled. Execution of a refueling scheme will require making up the necessary hoses with control valves, preventer line, and probably a suitable reel, similar to a target reel, to assist in raising and lowering. Because of further delivery delays, it is now expected that the first detachment of VP Squadron SIX-F will have completed its ferry flight to Pearl Harbor with six PBY-1 airplanes soon after 15 January 1936.

2. The chief factor attending the feasibility of the proposed plan is that of airmanship. The task of the refueling plane is simply to fly a straight course, at steady speed, in a shallow glide. However, the plane being refueled must fly a very precise formation underneath the refueling plane during the entire period of contact and must follow special procedures for approach and departure to avoid fouling of the hose in the propeller or with any other part of lower airplane. Since refueling has been conducted by units of Aircraft, Base Force, a few years ago, and a definite procedure established and since the flying requirements differ in no respect from those regularly met in the daily tactical employment of any squadron, no concern is raised regarding the ability of this force to handle this problem. The ability of the pilot (s) of the receiving plane has not been demonstrated and

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since this phase of flying is not ordinarily practised by, or included in the training of, civilian or commercial aviators it is reasonable to assume that considerable special training will be required to assure the success of the undertaking. It is considered that this training should not be at the expense of the navy either in cost of time of pilots and airplanes, but that it should be obtained commercially. When in all respects ready as a result of training with commercial planes and pilots, the crew of the plane to be refueled should finally rehearse with the navy crew and plane.

3. Providing the foregoing condition is met, the principal item of cost to the navy will be that of the expedition involving use of one tender and two airplanes in passage to and from Midway and in operations at that point.

4. Funds for gasoline and oil and allowances of fuel oil require greatest economy in operations in order to carry out fleet employment schedules. Special operations, such as that proposed herewith, must be financed by special allotments. Accordingly, if approval of navy participation is to be given, the following additional funds and allowances are requested:

(a) Aviation Navy - $1,000 (to cover cost of gasoline and oil consumed by navy aircraft).

(b) 900 barrels of fuel oil and additional 2300 steaming miles for AVP.

E. J. King
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