

missionaries to foreign lands

By Frances Vitulli

The missionary determination of two Pacific Northern Airline pilots from Mercer Island and Des Moines is slowly but surely being rewarded.

The Piper Super Cub plane which Jerry Fay and Everett (Bud) Donovan planned to buy to transport mission priests and Medical Missionary of Mary Sisters to their three mission stations in Kenya's arid desert area has been ordered.

The story of the two men, Fay a member of St. Monica Parish and Donovan from St. Philomena's, was told recently in *The Progress*. The men hoped to raise \$11,000 to buy the plane and the much-needed radio transmitters. They planned to have the plane shipped from the factory in Pennsylvania to New York where they would ship it to Mombasa, the Kenyan port city.

Fay and Donovan hoped to assemble the plane at Mombasa and fly it to Kitale where the

mission is located. There they would direct instructions on how to fly and maintain the plane.

The area that the Piper Cub will cover is the Turkana or the Northern Desert. Up until 1959 it had been off limits to white men due to too much quicksand and too little food and shelter. Three years ago lack of rain caused a vast drought. The grass withered away and about 80 per cent of the camels and goats, on which the Turkana people depended, died.

The drought was followed by torrential rains and the people were saved from extinction only by government air supplies. With the flooding ended, the animal herds were so depleted they couldn't support the people. Relief camps weren't the answer so officials in Nairobi allowed the white missionaries to venture into Turkana.

With this opening the Medical Missionaries of Mary and other Catholic mission groups had the chance they had waited for.



Jerry Fay, commercial pilot, spearheaded drive for plane for missionary work.

The first relief camp was opened in December, 1961 and with it came the problems of

transportation. Jeep was the only way and the trip between Kitale and Lodwar, the relief camp, meant 15 hours on the road in good weather and no trip at all in bad.

It was at this point that Jerry Fay entered the picture. Aware of the work of the Medical Missionary Sisters, Jerry corresponded with Bishop Joseph Houlihan of Eldoret in East Africa whose diocese covers the Turkana. When the question of transportation difficulties arose, Bishop Houlihan pointed out how useful a light plane would be.

Fay inquired further, discussed his idea with parish members and the plan was started. Bud Donovan also became interested and offered to go to Kenya at his own expense for three months to train the missionaries in handling the plane. Fay, who is also paying his own expenses, will spend a month there setting up the program.

But both men agree there have been hitches along the way.

"The plane won't be out of the factory until December 20" Fay explained "and that won't meet our planned shipping date from New York. The next available date is January 11 and that would mean late February before the plane would reach Mombasa."

"With the monsoon season in March and April this means we'd just sit around two months and we can't take that much leave from PNA."

So the two men have appealed to Senators Warren Magnuson and Henry Jackson for help in getting the armed forces to ship or fly the plane to Africa.

A second hitch, now overcome, was the Kenya government which at first couldn't understand the motives of the two men. "They thought we were going to start a flying service

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Bud Donovan will train African Missionaries to fly Piper Super Cub.

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**missionaries
 sent to many
 other lands**

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 and make a killing," Fay laughed.

"Bishop Joseph Houlihan, Bishop of Eldoret in East Africa, explained our purpose and that we'd help the natives who live so far from medical aid. Now they can't do enough for us."

Last, but not least, is the matter of money which is still needed to completely pay off the plane. Members of individual parishes have banded together to help the men. Fay cited Dr. Milt Walter, Frank Baird and Daryl Hill as being particularly helpful and encouraging. Larry Anderson, Tom Murphy and Dr. Paul Hardy have been with the two men from the beginning lending aid and encouragement.

"Emotionally, it gets very discouraging when you run up against blank wall after blank wall," Fay smiled slightly. "Then you find someone with your own enthusiasm and things begin to look up again."

Those wishing to help the pilots in their massive project may send donations to the Marian Medical Aircraft Fund, Society for the Propagation of the Faith, 907 Terry Ave., Seattle 4.

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