



## DRAMA FROM THE NORTH

# 'Snowtrain' And Firestone Tires In Story Of Freight Line Road To The Arctic

When an independent truck line's vehicles blasted their way from Fairbanks, Alaska, to the shores of the Arctic Ocean, they opened up a new idea in the science of moving, supplying, and evacuating military troops.

That is the conclusion reached in an article entitled "Highway to the Arctic Ocean" by Colonel G. L. Curtis, USAF, in the National Defense Transportation Journal.

The article describes the pioneering adventure of Alaska Freight Lines, Inc., which drove its regular highway trucks from Fairbanks, Alaska, to the Arctic Ocean to carry supplies and fuel for construction of the U. S.-Canadian "Dew Line" radar screen.

The freight line built its own 400-mile highway in only 39 days, smashing through a virtually unknown and uncharted area of snow and ice. The highway enabled Alaska Freight to bring its freight by truck and trailer, and a LeTourneau "Snowtrain," equipped with 24 giant Firestone tubeless tires, to the site where the radar screen was being built. The project saved the Air Force much of the great expense that would have been necessary if all material had been flown in, and transportation schedules were maintained despite tricky Arctic weather.

A COLOR PHOTO of the "Snowtrain" is featured on the cover of the magazine.

The article gave details of the construction of the highway. Alaska Freight built its own Wannigans (sled-mounted cabins for use as sleeping and cooking quarters for the crews), and the first units headed north from

Fairbanks just a month and two days from the day the approval was given by the Air Force and Army for the project.

Although a summer road exists between Fairbanks and a small unidentified community way station located on the Arctic Circle, this road has always been impassable during the bitter Arctic winters. Alaska Freight Lines' lead tractor train blasted through to this intermediate point over terrain previously considered impassable in exactly eight days.

THE "CAT" train crossed the frozen Yukon River and headed north for the Arctic Ocean. Ahead the lead unit, an Alaskan guide from Big Delta and an Alaskan Indian guide from Fort Yukon went forward on snowshoes, working in constant liaison with Alaska Freight Lines' own scouting plane. Red flags dropped from the plane were spotted along the most passable routes for the lead "Cat" to follow. Constant radio-telephone communication was maintained between the scouts, the plane, and all units of the following trains.

Two weeks after the original "Cat" train left Fairbanks, a second train followed. This unit was charged with the actual building of the Arctic Highway, a road 25 feet in width, across the roughest, coldest, least-known territory in the Northern Hemisphere, to the Arctic Ocean, more than 400 miles away. Following in the wake of the "Cats" was a convoy of 32 line-haul diesel truck and trailer units, designed for paced highways but never for Arctic transportation.

BEHIND the train of road-

building "Cats" and diesel trucks rolled the LeTourneau "Snowtrain," each of its 24 wheels individually powered, its five trailer units loaded with 150 tons of supplies. The wheels of the "Snowtrain" were 7 feet 4 inches high, and the trailer beds stood nine feet off the ground, enabling the train to roll securely over the roughest terrain.

Early last year, the "Snowtrain" and 32 line-haul trucks and trailers reached their Arctic shore destination with 500 tons of freight for the "Dew Line." Originally, the trucks and trailers were to go only to the dividing line between the sub-Arctic and the actual Arctic and the "Snowtrain" was to carry all supplies from there. However, the trucks surpassed expectation and kept rolling north.

This achievement, according to Colonel Curtis, has opened up a new concept in logistic support of Arctic sites, reversing the original resupply program for the "Dew Line" from the summer open-water season to the winter frozen-tundra season.

WORD from LeTourneau representatives was that the Firestone tires gave trouble-free service on the "Snowtrain." They are wide-base, low pressure tires, 7 feet 4 inches high. Where they contact the ground they are three feet, two inches wide.

Alfred Ghezzi, Jr., President of Alaska Freight Lines, believes he can use his "Snowtrain" over the ice to all of the radar stations in Alaska from the Arctic Ocean base throughout the 9 to 10-month period in the year when the ice closes in and rivers are frozen over. Ships can come into the area only two or three months during the year to distribute supplies.

## Main Office

Mrs. Carolyn Sanders entertained her daughter, Katherine Jean Sanders, November 8, on the occasion of the daughter's eighth birthday. Some 15 guests were present for the party at the Sanders home on Poston Circle, and for a theatre party.

Doris McCready and Helen Spencer, both of Main Office, entertained at a miscellaneous shower recently for June Boyd, bride-elect of William McDaniel of Rutherfordton. At the shower, held in the home of Miss McCready on Davis Park Road, the honoree received a corsage of white carnations, and gifts of Crystal and china in her chosen pattern.

## Plastic Dip

Mr. and Mrs. Evangelo Androlake express their thanks to employees here, for their kindness during their son's five-day stay in Memorial Hospital recently.

## Shop

Miss Betty Little, student at Tulane University, New Orleans, La., and daughter of Cramer Little, lathe operator, and Mrs. Little, is a patient at Gaston Memorial Hospital.

Miss Marie Moore, student at Woman's College, Greensboro, N. C., spent the Christmas holidays with her parents Howard Moore, machinist, and Mrs. Moore.

Rudolph Bulman, son of E. G. Bulman, Shop foreman, has returned to his home after being a patient at Memorial Hospital, Charlotte.

Rosie Francum, tool room clerk, had as recent guest, her daughter, Peggy Myers, from Washington, D. C.

Mary Rose Foy, student nurse at Spartanburg General Hospital, visited her parents, Ed Foy, lathe operator, and Mrs. Foy.

Daniel Walker, son of roller shop foreman Paul Walker, is a student at Gaston Technical Institute, Gastonia.

## Spinning

Miss Margaret Davis spent a recent week end visiting her sister, Mrs. J. C. Bolin in Gaffney, S. C.

Harry Parton, doffer, is a patient at Gaston Memorial Hospital.

Mr. and Mrs. Bobby Wolfe and son of Cleveland, Ohio, visited recently with Mr. and Mrs. O. M. Taylor. Other visitors during the holidays were Lottie Burton and children of Kings Mountain, N. C., and Robert Carpenter of Kannapolis, N. C.

## Spooling

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Thomas and family of Kannapolis, N. C., spent a recent week end with Mr. Thomas' sister, Mrs. Lenora Morrow, spooler tender.

Miss Barbara Foster and Mrs. Helen Williams, daughters of Mrs. Mae Foster, spooler tender, spent a recent week end visiting Mrs. Williams' husband who is stationed with the U. S. Army at Fort Story, Va.

Mrs. Sally Crompton of Great Falls, S. C., spent a week end recently with her sister, Mrs. Eunice Ivey, spooler tender.

Mrs. Arnold Tipton and children of Robbinsville, N. C., visited Mrs. Tipton's mother, Mrs. Mae Smith, spooler tender, several weeks during the Christmas season.

Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher Tucker and family of Sanford, N. C., spent a recent week end visiting Mrs. Ruth Medlin, spooler tender.

Calvin May, yarn man, has returned to work after several weeks absence due to illness.

Mrs. Pauline Daily, warper tender, and family visited one day with Mrs. Daily's parents, Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Deal in Athens, Ga., in late 1955.

Ray Clark, creeler, visited his parents in Murphy, N. C. recently.

Joe Hice, husband of Hazel Hice, warper helper, is a patient in the Veteran's Hospital in Columbia, S. C.

Mrs. Grady Davis, reclamer, and husband, Grady Davis, Carding Department, visited Mr. and Mrs. Quincy Hartman of Cleveland County recently.

Mr. and Mrs. Donald Carroll were recent guests of Mrs. Rosella Dover, spooler tender.

Mrs. Ann Jonas, spooler tender, and husband visited recently with Mrs. David Marrash and family in Mt. Rainier, Md.

Mrs. Mattie Bell Stowe, starter maker, is a patient in the Gaston Memorial Hospital.

J. C. Westbrook has returned to work after several weeks of absence from work due to illness.

Airman Charles Hardin of Mississippi, was a recent visitor with his father, Gwyn Hardin, doffer.

Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Shehane visited Mrs. Vera Short, spooler tender, recently.

## Warehouse

Lonnie Barber of the Warehouse celebrated a birthday recently. Will Osborn, yardman, and Jasper McCollum of Synthetics, report a recent all-day rabbit hunt.

George Jackson has returned to work after an extended illness.

E. H. Easter, warehouse cleaner, had a week-long vacation near the end of December.

Mrs. J. B. White and children of High Point, N. C., recently visited Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd Lewis for a week.

## Weaving

Frances Gault of Washington, D. C., was a recent visitor of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Taylor.

Mrs. Evelyn Hogan of Andrews, N. C., visited with Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Hogan, late last year. Mrs. Hogan is employed in Rayon Weaving as a tie-in-hand.

Melvin Morrison, weaver, has returned to work after a recent stay in the hospital.

Peggy Faircloth of Greenville, S. C., niece of Mrs. Betty Martin, battery hand, spent her vacation in Gastonia in late December.

Mrs. Sarah Davis, battery hand, and family spent a recent week end with Mr. and Mrs. Richard C. Cloninger of Belmont, N. C.

Sgt. Frank Miller and family of Colorado Springs, Colo., visited his sister recently, Mrs. Audrey Mathis, smash hand.

## Winding

Mrs. Frank Anthony and children of Key West, Fla., visited with Mrs. Faye Ross, winder tender, her sister, recently.

E. P. McArver, section man, and Charles McArver attended the Shrine Bowl Football game in Charlotte, N. C., December 3.

Ernest Coleman, yarn man, spent a week of his vacation with his mother in Murphy, N. C., in late December.

## Roger Firestone Gets UCP Award

Roger S. Firestone, President of Firestone Plastics Company, Pottstown, Pa., is the new Executive Vice President of United Cerebral Palsy.

At the close of the 1955 UCP drive Mr. Firestone UCP national campaign Chairman for that year, reported Campaign receipts of \$7,500,000. For his services in 1955 Mr. Firestone received the United Cerebral Palsy Distinguished Service Award.

## IN MEMORIAM

### John Lindsay

John R. Lindsay of Bessemer City, died last November 6, after an extended illness. Mr. Lindsay, 61 years old, was the brother of Martha Deaton, warper, in the Spooling Department.

Mrs. Sam Johnson, grandmother of Mrs. Alma Westbrooks, spooler tender, died at her home in Asheville, N. C., November 30.

Jacob Brunner, a retired Shop employee, died November 18.