

'The Caroline' Ends 9 Years of Service As Kennedy Plane

WASHINGTON, Sept. 20 (UPI) — The Kennedy family plane, "The Caroline," is being retired.

After almost nine years and 650,000 miles of carrying President Kennedy, his father, his brother, their wives and children, dogs, cats and other pets on business and pleasure trips, the twin-engine Convair 240 is now obsolete.

It made what was expected to be its last trip Sept. 17, when it brought Senator Edward M. Kennedy's wife, Joan, and staff aides to the capital from the Kennedy compound at Hyannis Port, Mass.

The pilot, Robert Griscom, 36, said he hoped to talk the father, Joseph P. Kennedy, into making one last flight, if only from Hyannis Port to Boston. "This is one man's plane," Mr. Griscom said.

The elder Kennedy bought the plane, one of the first pressurized airliners manufactured for commercial use after World War II, from American Airlines in 1959. He named it for the two-year-old daughter of his son, Jack, who was about to embark on his successful cross-country quest for the Presidency.

It was the first personal plane ever to be used by a Presidential candidate in an election campaign. It carried the late President, a small crew and staff and reporters 225,000 miles during the 1960 primary and general elections.

One swivel armchair on the left side of the cabin was used traditionally by the ranking Kennedy on board. Opposite it and across a long table is a typewriter. A couch extends to the galley, and beyond is the cockpit.

Seats for 16 persons run the length of the right side of the cabin with tables between. One is decorated with a map of the country.

To the rear of the plane is a private compartment with a big armchair, bed and desk. There the late President would nap, grab a quick snack of tomato soup and milk, or plan the next stage in his campaign.

The plane has always been based at La Guardia Airport in New York.