

"SO YOU drive these flying machines, do you?" said Mr. Blotto on learning that I was a private pilot. "Well, I'll never fly. There's nothing to recommend it."

To me, recently returned from 5,000 miles of exhilarating care-free travel, his words were a red flag. Long ago I became tired of listening to people with preconceived ideas about aviation tell me how useless airplanes are. I suppose I replied a little too hotly to Mr. Blotto, but I think I woke him up. My belligerent mood has—or should—keep his eyes focused on the highway straight ahead most of the time. But in the air, it's different. After a little cross country experience, all I had to do was to check my posit-carried over, however, and I still have the urge to wage a battle against the barrier of closed minds. Mr. Blotto was, unfortunately, typical of too many Americans who, serene in ignorance, decry flying.

One of Blotto's first bright comments was, "Air travel is no pleasure, you can't see anything." Certainly in private flying you can see all there is. After all, if you really want to get an objective view of things, you must travel by plane. The car driver must ion occasionally with a sectional map, and settle down to enjoy myself. The topography of the entire country lay below us, and even at 100 m.p.h. the landscape unfolded slowly giving plenty of time to examine points of interest. I've been West before, but I had been restricted to hasty glimpses of swiftly passing fields and houses. Never before did I have the whole geographical panorama clearly presented. As we flew, we seemed to be over a huge relief map showing every detail, water sheds with all their tributaries, foothills increasingly steep leading up to gigantic mountains, towns and trees hugging the banks of rivers and canals. From the air I saw the true perspective of that vast region of West Texas. Between San Angelo and El Paso, the twin ribbons of a railroad track were our only connection with civilization. I felt secure with our 24 gallons of gas, but I realized as never before

AVIATION'S ADVANTAGES

Reprinted from February 1936 "Pilot" Magazine

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● REFUTING GENERAL OBJECTIONS TO AIR TRAVEL

what broad reaches lie within the borders of Texas.

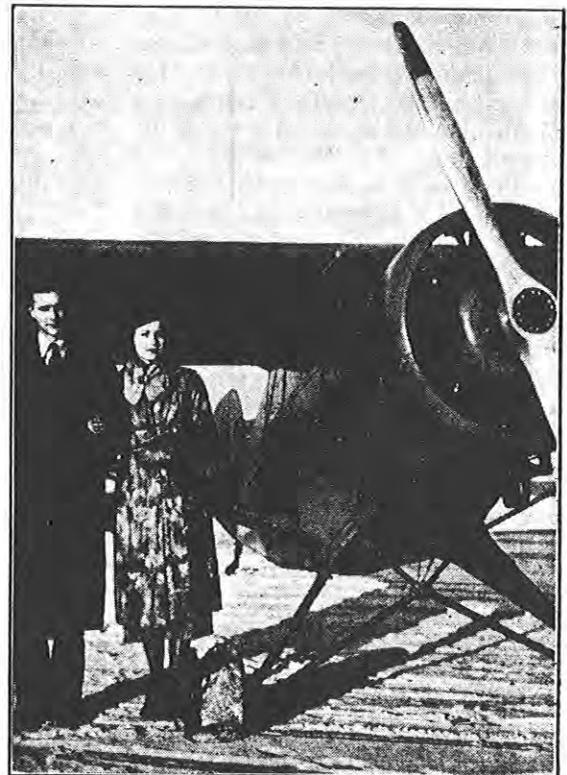
If Mr. Blotto had been driving his car on our schedule, he would not have had time to visit the places we did. The 140 miles from Ft. Stockton to Carlsbad were merely a matter of a late afternoon hop. We saw the Caverns and the following morning, flew westward again, over El Capitan mountain, that grim old Spanish soldier who guards the pass, and on to El Paso. We spent almost five hours in Old Mexico, bargaining over curios in Juarez, and still had ample time to fly on to Tucson before sunset. I wonder where Blotto and his car would have been by then?

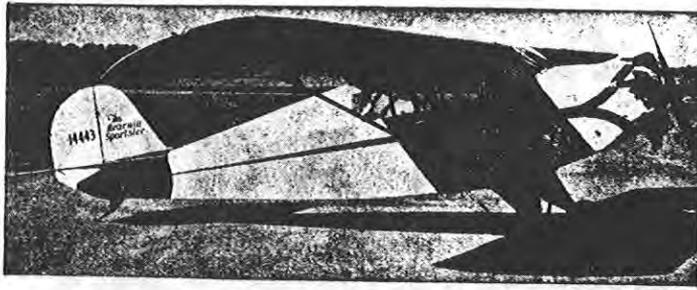
From Tucson, winging westward over Yuma, we saw the sand hills of Eastern California where the desert scenes for the movies are taken. Finally we crossed a little irrigation ditch, and as if by magic, passed over into that wonderful agricultural paradise, Imperial Valley. Beneath us were rows and rows of evenly spaced orange trees and grape vines. Smoke from hundreds of brush fires sent a thin haze into the blue air. A few miles to the west we crossed another irrigation ditch and abruptly found ourselves out over sage brush again with a high range of mountains looming twenty miles ahead. From over these mountains at an altitude of 12,000 feet,

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... recently completed
5000 miles of
exhilarating carefree air
travel.

Mr. and Mrs. Ken
Rearwin of Kansas City.





... Gasoline averaged about 1c a mile, disproving the objection "It costs too much."

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we could see the white stucco houses of San Diego with their bright green and red roofs. On the far side of the city lay Lindbergh Field, and beyond it the Pacific Ocean stretched out to meet the horizon. It was a wonderful view which I'll never forget.

From San Diego we flew up to Los Angeles, skirting a coastal fog which blanketed the shore a short distance inland. It lifted in time to give us a glimpse of the old mission San Juan Capistrano. In a little over an hour, we spanned the distance which meant days of weary travel to the Spanish friars.

After a few days in Los Angeles, we went northward over a sea of tumbled white clouds to Bakersfield, and on to San Francisco by way of Stockton. There we found an aerial sight long to be remembered. Approaching from the east, we flew over a low range of wooded mountains. On the other side of them we saw Oakland and Berkeley spread along the coast. Beyond them lay the Bay and across it, San Francisco's tall buildings clustered on a long promontory. As we passed over the Bay, we saw Alcatraz Prison, and waved a greeting to the boys on the Island. Something white fluttered in response. I thought it was Al Capone waving but my wife insisted it was only a bit of laundry hanging out to dry. We looked ahead and saw the new Golden Gate Bridge rapidly taking form. From the air, one realizes fully its colossal size. We circled Alameda, base of the China Clippers, and landed at San Francisco Bay Airdrome. A week later, we took off again on our way back to Los Angeles. It was great sport to pass by black dots of automobiles and long serpentine trains. Surely only Mr. Blotto would say you can't see anything from the air. That's the only place where you can get the com-

plete picture. We ended our flight with a multitude of vivid mental images, with lasting impressions of many a beautiful scene.

Robbed of his first objection, Mr. Blotto offered triumphantly, "Well, it costs too much to fly." Disproving this objection was like taking candy from a baby.

Today, a well constructed two-place airplane such as our Sportster model, actually costs less to operate than a low priced automobile. The general public still doesn't realize this fact. People cling to the well entrenched idea that flying is expensive, despite the reductions in airplane prices and in the cost of flying time. Business men, however, are beginning to see that flying their own ships is really economical. Our Rearwin Sportster honestly averages 20 miles to a gallon of gasoline and has a lower rate of oil consumption than any automobile I have ever owned. Tires will last for hundreds of hours and the mileage attained before a top overhaul is as great as on an automobile. On the basis of the service given by our former models, we feel that today's Rearwin Sportsters will easily last 2000 hours—and that's a long time. Last fall on our trip West, my gasoline averaged about 20c a gallon with tax refunds, or just 1c a mile. It is a little hard to compare the cost of my return rail ticket and my flying expenses on the way out, because outward bound I followed an indirect course which led as far south as the Gulf of Mexico. However, the rail mileage from K.C. to Los Angeles is 1780 miles. Fare for my wife and me was \$105.00, with Pullman and meals boosting the total to nearly \$150.00. The air distance can be covered in a Rearwin Sportster for \$30.00, which takes care of gas and oil, hangar, hotel for one night, and meals for two people. In addition to the

cash saving, something has to be said about time saving. If a man's time is worth anything at all, flying is equivalent to money in the bank.

I was slightly disappointed in Mr. Blotto's next comeback. I felt he might have done a little better. "Pooh," he said, "maybe you do see the scenery, and maybe it is cheap. But look at the sort of fellows who fly. Young Dare-devils. It certainly proves what sort of an affair aviation is. Just look at the fliers." I hastened to tell him about the type of flier we encountered on our trip, and he had to back down. It's true that even I can remember when about the only person in our community interested in airplanes was the daredevil type. You know—the young man who didn't feel that an ordinary car ran fast enough, so proceeded to strip down his auto, install a high speed transmission, or a high compression head in an effort to get more speed. Although this type of person was not the only one who turned to aviation, the opinion of the general public was that anyone interested in airplanes must be harum-scarum.

Today the picture has changed. There is a new type of flier. He is usually a young up-and-coming business or professional man but he may be a progressive fellow in his fifties when he learns to pilot his own ship. These new aviation enthusiasts enjoy the relaxation of flying, but most of them are also interested in the great saving of time which is now available. They kill several birds with one stone by covering long distances in a short time at exhilarating speeds. We have sold Rearwin Sportsters to many such people. To list a few—a partner of a successful accounting firm who travels between branch offices in his own plane; a prominent official in America's largest lumber company who covers a large territory by plane; a lawyer in the East who flies everywhere for cases. And there are many more.

Occasionally I meet someone like Mr. Blotto who talks about the inconveniences of flying—how airplanes aren't as dependable as automobiles, that there are always little things needing fixing, how poorly located air-

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ports are. In short, this type of person "just can't be bothered" with flying.

My home town of about 20,000 population is well located at the cross roads of two hard surfaced main highways. But fifteen years ago dirt roads connected it with other nearby places. On Sundays, we often drove to a small town, about 40 miles away to visit relatives. At that time even forty miles was quite a jaunt. First we looked in Saturday's paper to see what the weather was supposed to be. Next we called the local telephone office to find out how the roads were "up the line." Finally if all the signs and omens were favorable, we started out to cover 40 miles in a little less than two hours—with luck. Rarely did we make a round trip without one or more flat tires, and often we had engine trouble before arriving safely home that night. Our experiences were duplicated by thousands of others. But we didn't give up automobiles and automobile trips. Not at all; we thought them great sport.

I grant that airplanes, when used for short distances, are a little more trouble than automobiles. But look at the tremendous time and mileage saving on longer trips; think of the great advances in airplane construction and airport facilities in the last few years. Thanks to wide awake city aviation committees and recent Federal funds, the nation is fast being covered with good landing fields. And with modern economically operated airplanes, flying is constantly being made even more pleasurable.

Mr. Blotto entirely overlooked the fact that the hospitality and helpful friendliness which fliers receive away from their home airports more than compensates for any possible inconveniences. No matter what the size of the field or how late one arrives, he can always be sure of a warm welcome. Of course all of us like the large, easily accessible fields, but I think we too often take for granted the

hospitality which we receive everywhere. After all, that's something P.W.A. funds can't provide and without which the finest airport in the world isn't worth much.

Finally Blotto burst out with his secret difficulty. "I'm afraid of 'em," he said. "They kill people off like flies. They're not safe!"

In the face of an increasing number of highway fatalities, all of us in aviation are constantly being told that autos are reasonably safe, airplanes unsafe. I usually drive between 50 and 60 miles an hour—and although I never pass on hills or curves, always slow down at dangerous intersections, and otherwise try to be careful, every time I drive any distance whatever I have one or two close shaves that leave me a bit shaky, contemplating what might have happened.

Manufacturers of automobiles no longer tell us that cars are safe, but they do spend a great deal of money trying to prove how much less chance there is of dying in today's wreck compared with that of a few years ago. For example, when your car is crowded off the highway and rolls over half a dozen times, you will merely be smashed around inside an all steel body instead of being shoved through a caved-in top. You are also offered the choice of having your throat cut off by a piece of broken glass or getting a brain concussion by smashing your head against a shatter proof windshield. Nevertheless, dangerous as the highways are, with their drunken drivers, road hogs, careless drivers, speed demons, over-size trucks and the like, I still use an automobile on very short trips. But from now on, if I can possibly arrange it, I'm going to stick to the flying of my own plane. I know I'm much safer.

However, the fact that riding in automobiles is no longer safe does not prove that flying is safe.

Why do people like Mr. Blotto have the impression that airplanes are dangerous? I believe one reason is the unfortunate publicity which all airplane wrecks receive. Of course wrecks

are news and should be published, but I can't see any reason for splashing the information all over the front page for days. If Mr. and Mrs. John Smith and their three children are killed in an automobile wreck on some Saturday night, they will merely be added to the numerical total of fifty or sixty killed every week-end by automobiles and listed in a small paragraph on page three. If a week later, Mr. Smith's brother is killed in a private plane or on an airliner, we are shown pictures of the deceased and his life history is printed on the front page. In fact he is mentioned in so many consecutive issues that I'm not always sure whether one or half a dozen Mr. Smiths were killed. Once an airplane wreck occurs the newspapers make sure that it is lastingly imprinted on the public's mind.

A large percentage of plane accidents involve military craft. Mr. Blotto does not realize that speedy attack planes land very fast and are bound to have trouble when forced to come down in small fields or rough country. The public forgets that military planes must do a great many acrobatics and maneuvers that aren't exactly safe. Army and navy pilots also often make long flights in bad weather to simulate war conditions. But to Mr. Blotto, an airplane accident, military or civil, is an airplane accident, "for a' that."

While civil mishaps are becoming more and more infrequent, they of course do still occur. But I believe that if we discount the number of wrecks in old, often unlicensed ships, and the absolutely unnecessary ones in storms and fogs, the total of civilian fatalities becomes amazingly low.

After all, almost any piece of machinery can be made dangerous by its human operator, and the airplane is no exception. I for one am firmly convinced that when properly handled in decent weather, the airplane is as safe or safer than any other means of transportation.