

LOCKLEAR GIVES PERSONAL STORY OF HIS STUNTS IN THE AIR



Courtesy The Lincoln Daily Star. Lieutenant Ormer Locklear, dare-devil aviator of Fort Worth, Texas, who thrilled Nebraska "Victory" state fair visitors with his stunts in mid-air, and his aides, Lieutenants Short and Elliott. Reading from left to right: Lieut. Shirley J. Short, Lieut. Locklear, Lieut. Milton Elliott. Locklear performed his first stunts when at Baron Field, Texas, and the government officials threatened him with court-martial. Since he has demonstrated his work for them, they have offered him the use of any of the government fields for his experimental work. He is 28 years old and has 1,000 flying hours to his credit, having been an instructor in the camp in Texas. His own personal story explaining how he does his stunts and telling of his ambitions, hobbies and superstitions, is told in the accompanying article.

By Leonard Kline.
 "How does he do it?" This is the question on the lips of every one of the quarter million persons who saw Lieutenant Ormer Locklear, the worlds most daring aviator, perform at the Nebraska "Victory" fair this year. Volumes have been written about the stunts which Locklear has in his extensive repertoire but very little has been said about the manner in which he does these stunts or how he feels while he is doing them, he told me in several conversations I had with him while he was in Lincoln. "Ninety-five percent of the people who question me," he said, "want to know whether I am braced or tied to the plane, whether I have cleated shoes for standing on the plane or if I use safety devices in making my change from plane to plane."
 "If I had to use all these things," he told me, "I wouldn't be in this game. There would be no fascination in it for me if there was no danger."
 Locklear uses an ordinary plane, with no extra braces, his shoes are leather-soled and rubber-heeled and he carried no safety belts or ropes whatever. The people who see him perform see everything there is to see.
 After people know this some of them figure that perhaps his stunts are not as dangerous as they appear. At this period, however, it is well for them to know that there are approximately 75,000 aviators in the world

was waiting for his time to go up on his first day at the fair.

His Greatest Danger.
 The answer was the one which might have been expected.

"While I am changing planes," he said, "The swirling propeller of Lieutenant Elliott's machine coming toward me as I stand on the outer edge of the top wing of Lieutenant Short's machine is probably the greatest danger I have to face. A little puff of wind, up or down or sidewise, or an air hole, would throw me into the whirling blades."

"We cannot hear each other up there for the noise of the propellers and I guide Elliott's plane by motions of my hands. I can tell him to come forward or to go to one side or the other. We can tell as much from the expression on each other's faces as from anything. When something is wrong we show it by our expression and the others know immediately what the trouble is."

A Narrow Escape.
 At St. Paul, Minnesota, last week Locklear had a narrow escape. He was just ready to grasp the rope ladder, when a gust of wind nearly brought the planes together. He was forced to slide quickly from the top wing of Short's machine to avoid being caught. In his final performance he had to jump for the ladder and caught it by his left hand. His wrist was sore from the sprain, when he arrived in Lincoln on Tuesday.

"There is one peculiar thing about my change from plane to plane," Locklear said. "I never think to look to see how Short gets his machine away from under me after I have caught Elliott's plane. Nearly every day I go up I say to myself that I am going to watch him but I never do. I have to concentrate upon Elliott's plane and on the ladder."

Has Some Superstitions.
 "Do you have any superstitions," I wanted to know.

"Well, very few," he replied, "I always wear my army identification tag on the little silver chain around my wrist and I would not fly without it. I don't like to fly on Sunday either, and when I do it is always against my will. Sometimes when I am passing over a graveyard during my flying, I wonder if I am to be successful." And then he smiled that pleasant smile that makes friends for him wherever he goes.

Locklear's description of his method in performing his feats on various parts of the planes is particularly interesting. His journeys from the seat to the ends of the wings and the fuselage are made quickly in spite of his precarious position and the uncertainty of wind currents.

Many Things to Watch.
 "While going from my seat to the wings," he explained, "I step from one brace to the other, all the time leaning against the wind, watching for air pockets or bad currents, listening to the hum of the motor and analyzing the 'feel' of the plane."

The breeze is terrific up there and I must make a great deal of allowance for that. Locklear wears a chamois-skin jacket and an especially made cap and goggles to protect him from the wind but these are the only "extras" he wears. While in Lincoln he was troubled somewhat with hay fever and his face was rather badly chapped from contact with the air.

"Senses" Air Pockets.
 It is Locklear's experiences that enables him to climb to the wings successfully. His acquired ability to sense air pockets and diverging air currents has often saved him from death, he told me. He doesn't know how he can tell when they are coming but it apparently is a sort of a sixth sense. While at Nebraska, (Continued on page 7.)

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Note—E. E. Penke, Kansas City Realtor, in a speech to the Omaha Real Estate Board, June 5, said Omaha will have 500,000 population in ten years. He's one of many conservative men who have that opinion.

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