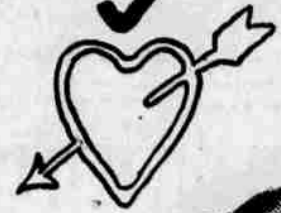


Romance In the Air Pulsates Through Omaha



YAEGER lets Friend Wife have the "last word" and he's off to the clouds

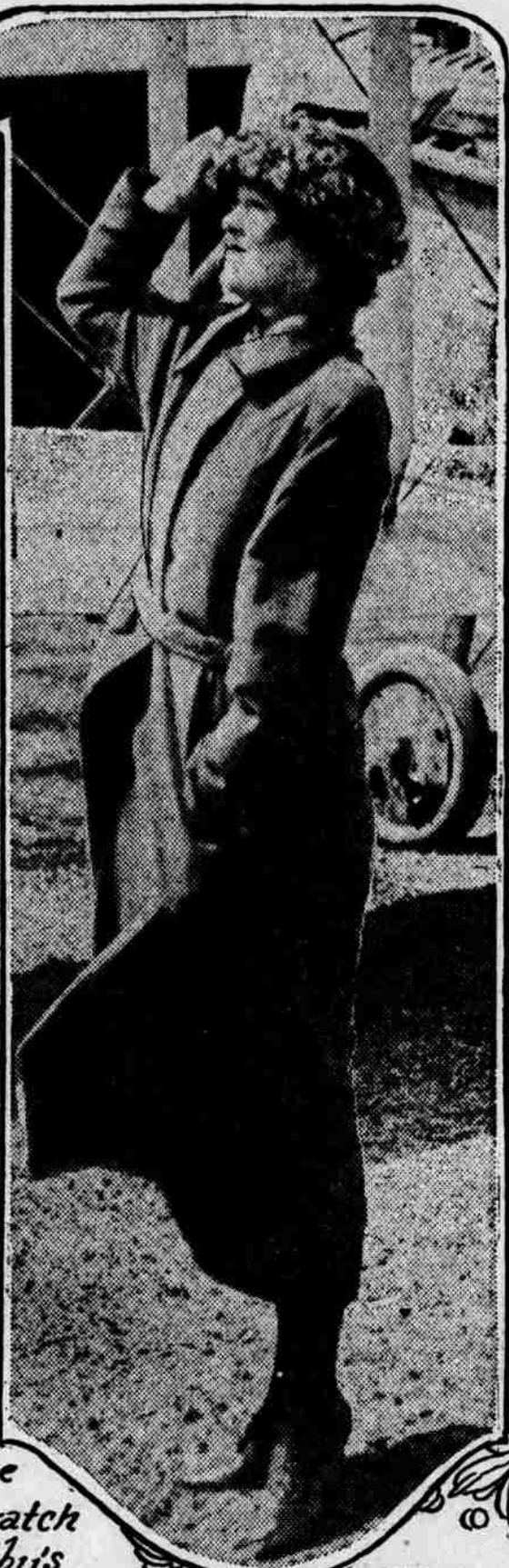
LOVE makes Airplanes Speed Faster; Battles Fear; Doubt, Blizzards, Darkness and Uncertainty; Rewards Fearless Birdmen of Uncle Sam's Air Mail.



Madame Knight buttonholes Pilot Jack to give him his flying instructions



Here's why Pickup hurries home—wife's waitin' on the front stoop



"Ship Ahoy" as Mrs. H.G. Smith battles the wind to watch her hubby's "ship" come in



This is "Tex" Marshall and his winged mate. She flew cross-country with him.



A Bungalow and a Bike, That's Why Hopson Won That Prize—for This Wife and Son.

There's romance in the air. If you don't believe it, ask any of the air mail pilots flying between Chicago and Omaha, or between Omaha and Cheyenne. Better still, ask their wives and sweethearts.

They'll tell you altitude makes the heart grow fonder; that the man who thinks marriage is the end of romance should become an air mail pilot.

If the wife of such a man isn't out anxiously waiting for him to make his first—yes, even his 20th landing—the only solution is a divorce court, say both the wives and their flying husbands.

Neither these birdmen, who battle the elements to hasten the delivery of mail, nor their wives, contend aviation is the solution of the divorce problem.

Home, Sweet Home. The wives—they're nearly all young, simply assert the thought of their men, battling high above the clouds for life and the good of the service, is enough to make their hearts glow with appreciation and love.

And the men—well, they never tire of telling how cozy it is to be home with "wifey" after a long, hard flight.

"Bright lights and jazz music may appeal to some, but give us the light of our fireplace and the music of our wives' voices," say these men of the air.

Verne Pickup is one of the young husbands who typifies this spirit. Verne leaps from his plane, checks in, then hurries home to Mrs. Pickup and their cozy little bungalow in Cheyenne. Nothing delays him; he doesn't even stop to light a cigaret, according to his friends.

Then there is William C. Hopson, who won The Bee's \$500 prize for flying 23,373 miles at an average speed of 80 miles or better during the six months preceding March 8.

"You'd Be Surprised."

Pilot Hopson acquired the reputation of being "fast" and a "high flyer" long before he began flying between Omaha and Chicago. Most wives would object to having their husbands called either fast or a high flyer, no doubt, but not Mrs. Hopson. She rather takes pride in it, for she knows it applies entirely to his ability as an aviator.

Pilot Hopson holds the high flight record, 16,000 feet, for the distance from New York to Bellefonte and broke the time records from Cleveland to New York by making the 425-mile trip in 3 hours and 1 minute.

He was surprised when informed he had won the first prize money, but hesitated not a second when asked how he would spend it.

At Home—Helpless. "Buy a bicycle for 'Bobbie' and make the first payment on a cozy little bungalow somewhere in Omaha," he replied. "I had 'em both promised to the wife and kid, so it was up to me to 'cop' the prize."

How many ordinary husbands would share, well, say their poker

Death Immortalizes Another Air Pilot

Only last Thursday, when this tale of the bravery and fearlessness of the air mail wives was put into type, came the word of the sudden death of Pilot Walter M. Bunting, whose body was cremated in the flames which consumed his plane when it crashed at Rock Springs, Wyo.

And another brave young wife, back at Carney's Point, N. J., was widowed in the pioneering days of the transcontinental air mail service.

Bunting was only 26 and displayed that indomitable spirit of the service by returning at once to his plane after several months in an Omaha hospital, recovering from injuries received in a nose-dive at Ak-Sar-Ben field during a snowstorm the day before Christmas.

winnings for six months, with their wife and son, we ask you? Yet Pilot Hopson, after risking his life for six months to win a \$500 prize, was glad to spend it all for the enjoyment of his little family.

Strange, perhaps, but not a married pilot flying into Omaha can see where he is undergoing nearly the hardships of his wife, who "must sit at home helpless, waiting for our return or failure to return," as one of them put it.

Imagine the feelings of little Mrs. Knight, seated in her lonely home in Cheyenne on the night her husband, Jack, made his spectacular night flight between North Platte and Chicago.

Pride and Fear.

Did closing her eyes shut out the vivid picture of her daring husband high in the air, battling through snow and sleet and darkness toward Omaha? Was she able to forget the possibility of his losing his way and the terrible consequences?

He would be forced to land eventually in the blackness of night, should he stray from his unmarked course. He would have only one guide in making that landing—gravity. There could be but one result.

How she must have sighed with relief when a message told her he had landed safely on the well lighted Omaha field. Then came another message, telling of his unexpected departure for Chicago. There had been no one else to take the ship on through the night. Jack had volunteered.

No doubt pride at the thought of his bravery was mixed with fear for his precious life. He had never flown between Omaha and Chicago, even in daylight. And now it was night, with only the faint lights of towns and trains to keep him in his course.

For the Service.

Then, after hours that seemed years, came a message from Jack himself. He had landed safely at a Chicago field early in the morn-

ing. He was hailed as a hero. And the reputation, possibly the future of the air mail service was saved.

Mrs. Knight says the anxiety and suspense is compensated by the knowledge her husband is doing his part in the advancement of civilization. So say the wives of the other air pioneers.

"I suppose we feel about the same anxieties and worries that the wives of the early pioneers did," said Mrs. Yager, wife of Frank Yager. "Of course our husbands don't fight Indians or anything like that, but they're blazing the way to progress just the same, and with even more risk.

"Storms and engine trouble might force them down, and they might crash against the side of some mountain, or, if they landed safely they might starve or freeze. We have all those things to think about when they're 'out on the run.'"

"If They Fail."

Like the other air mail brides Mrs. Yager would rather dwell on her pride in her husband and his work, than on her own anxieties. "At first some of us wish our

husbands might quit flying," admitted Mrs. Yager, "but we soon get over that. Then we are as proud of what the air service is doing and the part they are taking in it as we are of our men."

"Indeed yes," corroborated Mrs. Jack Knight, as she sat at the window of her apartment and watched the blizzard whirl blasts of fine snow around the corner. "But just think, Jack is up in that right now.

"Worry? Of course one worries a little, even more than the pioneer wives Mrs. Yager mentioned could have worried. Their husbands could at least depend on themselves to fight their way out. Ours have to depend so much on mechanical devices. If they fail—

Headquarters First.

"But I never worry much if Jack isn't flying over the mountains or in bad weather. I used to, but not any more. There was the time in February when Jack made a forced landing in Telephone canyon which completely wrecked his ship. It was miles and miles away from any telephone and it was a long time before he could report. When he

finally got to a phone, through the snow, he reported to the field officials first, and then he called me. That's the kind of a flyer Jack is, and he knew that's what I would have wanted him to do.

"I certainly am proud to be the wife of an air mail pilot. It is wonderful to feel that you are helping, even a little bit, to do something that is making history, just as much as the old time pony express riders did.

"And do you know," she added, with a little smile, as if she considered the thought almost conceited, "I think that other women whose husbands are doing more ordinary things are sometimes just a little bit envious."

Become Fatalists.

Both Mrs. Yager and Mrs. Knight stoutly declare they married their husbands because they were birdmen, and like most other airwomen's wives they agree there "is something to a man who can fly an airplane 500 miles every day through every kind of weather condition."

"We think they are a lot bigger when they do that than if they sat

at a desk and did something anybody could do," said these two.

Mrs. Yager and Mrs. Knight say being married to air mail pilots has made them fatalists.

"I think when a man's time comes, it comes, whether he is in the air or walking the streets," declared Mrs. Yager. "I worry, of course, when Frank doesn't get in on time. Indeed, I am more than worried, and only my faith in his ability to handle a ship keeps me as brave as he would want me to be."

"Once I had the dinner table all set and he didn't come. He had made a forced landing somewhere and our dinner was spoiled. Now I don't set the table until he has arrived."

Flying Dispels Fear.

Mrs. Hopson and the wife of Pilot "Tex" Marshall found that by taking occasional flights with their husbands their fears were diminished.

Mrs. Hopson, who came to Omaha recently from New York with her husband, says she actually enjoys flying.

Mrs. Marshall, who resides at Maywood, Ill., also must have found a fascination in soaring aloft, for she has spent 100 hours in the air with her husband since he took up flying seven years ago.

She was with him in a cross-country flight from Florida to Ohio and experienced the sensation of a forced landing, which resulted in a minor crash during this trip.

Mr. and Mrs. Marshall have

been married seven years. "Tex" has been flying between Omaha and Chicago since last September.

Windmill In Jeopardy.

The wives of these pony express riders of the air take great pride in telling the achievements of their more reticent husbands.

They tell how Frank Yager, caught in a blinding snow squall, was forced to the ground, unable to see ahead of his propeller.

He found himself just grazing a thin lake in time to zoom up again. He again tried to find the ground and again had to turn upward, barely escaping some telephone wires.

The third time he narrowly missed a stout fence, and only on the fourth attempt did he reach the ground, barely grazing a farmer's windmill and coming to a stop against a farmhouse, invisible because of snow.

And when they tell of the farmer poking his head out of the door and berating the pilot for nearly demolishing his windmill they laugh merrily.

They relate how Jack Knight, unable to make headway against a gale blowing at 88 miles an hour on the ground, turned back to Cheyenne, making an almost unbelievable speed of 385 miles an hour back to the field, afterward hovering above it for more than 20 minutes motionless, unable to make the ground because of the wind and finally gaining it in a series of sidesteps.

They tell of Pilot James P.

Murray, one of the bachelors of the station, who crashed in an inaccessible canyon, unconscious for hours, came to life and guarded his load of mail in the wrecked plane for 30 hours in snow and freezing cold. In recognition of this devotion the mail service had the ship rebuilt in white, natural wood finish and dedicated it for Murray's exclusive use. It has become known as the "Silver Ship."

They have other tales with Harry Smith, J. F. Moore, Clarence Lange and Howard Brown in the hero roles, but can be induced to tell little of their own influence on the courage of their men, or of the romances which made their wives of fliers.

Met at "Y" Dance.

"I first met my husband at a Y. W. C. A. dance in Cheyenne," one of them confessed.

"There wasn't much romance, though, at least of the story book kind. I'll admit I admired him first because of what he is doing, but when I fell in love with him I'd have stuck to him if he went to raising potatoes."

The air wives take a keen, technical interest in their husband's work. Every one of them is "up" on the subjects which the pilots must know, ready to talk over difficulties, advise and plan at every turn. Few modern wives have as comprehensive a knowledge of their husbands' business as these wives of aviators.

Teas, parties, bridge worry.

(Turn to Page Eight, Column Four.)