

TWO MORE LIVES SAVED BY PARACHUTE JUMPS

Lieut. Leonard S. Flo, Air Service Reserve, is the twenty-third person, and Private, 1st Class, John McGlynn the twenty-fourth to save his life through the use of a parachute. The official report covering the crash of the Thomas-Morse plane which Lieut. Flo piloted was just recently received in the Office Chief of Air Service, and the pilot's story of his thrilling experience which accompanied the crash report is as follows:

"I took off at 11:52 a.m. November 11, 1925, in a Thomas Morse Training plane P-313, which is a side by side seater with metal fuselage, for the purpose of ferrying mechanic to Fairfield. On the way to Fairfield I executed a couple of loops, machine performing satisfactorily. When within two or three miles of Fairfield at an altitude of 2,000 feet I executed a barrel roll to the right. When about half way through the roll I heard a cracking sound but thought nothing serious had happened, but machine would not respond readily to controls; in other words, would not stop on top of the roll but started into another roll. When about half way through the other roll ship answered the controls, which were over to the left. Upon answering controls ship started into a left roll, but I was able to get it righted. When I had the ship in normal flying position it had a strong tendency to go into a spin. Upon looking out over the right side I noticed that the flying and landing wires were very slack and that the top and lower wings were jammed fairly close together. Because of the fact that I was flying from the left side of the ship it was impossible for me to determine the exact extent of damage done. I assumed that the wing structure had collapsed and was slowly disintegrating. I immediately told my mechanic to jump, which he failed to do. I yelled to him to jump several times as loud as I could, and as he made no effort to get out of the ship I shook him and again told him to jump. As soon as I shook him he immediately started to climb out on the wing and after pausing on the wing for a moment he jumped.

As I started to climb out of the machine it went into a spin and I tried momentarily to get it out, but as it did not respond readily to the controls I

again attempted to climb out. Because of the spinning of the ship I had difficulty in getting out of my seat and getting onto the wing. After getting out on the wing I tried to jump but found that I was unable to jump away from the ship, being held by the centrifugal force of the spin. The ship straightened out momentarily and at that time I jumped. Witnesses on the ground said that I left the plane at approximately 400 feet. After leaving the plane I felt for the wing and it was not in its socket. I then felt along the harness on my left side and found the ring dangling on its cable. I immediately pulled the ring and the chute seemed to open immediately, landing me in a tree approximately two miles west of Fairfield. Witnesses say that the chute opened at an altitude of about 100 feet from the ground. My mechanic landed shortly afterwards a few feet distant from the place where I had landed. I left the mechanic to watch the chutes, caught a ride with a passerby going towards Fairfield, and notified McCook Field by phone to the effect that my wing had collapsed and that the mechanic and myself had been forced to jump. I then went back to find the wreck of the plane, finding it approximately one-half mile from where I had landed."

Private McGlynn's story of his experience is as follows:

"Took off from McCook Field at 11:52 a.m. November 11, 1925, as a passenger in a ThomasMorse training plane, which is a side by side seater with metal fuselage. Lt. Flo, the pilot, intended to take me to Fairfield so that I could ration with the 88th Squadron at that place. On the way over Lt. Flo looped the ship twice. When within sight of Fairfield Lt. Flo started to barrel roll the ship. While in the roll I heard a cracking sound as though wood were breaking. Lt. Flo started yelling at me but I was unable to hear exactly what he was saying. I did hear him say to jump but did not understand that he really meant for me to jump out of the ship. After he shook me and pointed out over the right side - looking out in the direction in which he was pointing - I saw that the wires were all tangled up and flapping about and that the right front strut had broken at the top and was bent back towards the rear. After noticing this I readily understood that the ship was in danger and that Lt. Flo really intended for me to jump, and so at once started to climb out of the ship. After getting out of the ship I stopped to get hold of the rip cord before jumping. I found the rip cord just as Lt. Flo again yelled for me to jump, which I did.

After leaving the ship I was thrown in a series of somersaults and did not pull the cord until I was sure that I was clear of the ship. As soon as the chute opened I started twisting around, trying to see what had become of the ship and Lt. Flo. I caught sight of the ship just as it was straightening out of a spin, and Lt. Flo jumped immediately afterwards. It looked to me as though he was down to at least 300 or 400 feet when he jumped. After Lt. Flo jumped I could see him whirling over and over. I thought that he would never be able to get the chute open in time. When he was down to within what looked to me to be about 50 feet from the ground, his chute snapped out seemingly at the instant he landed - his chute catching in a tree. I felt sure that the chute had not opened in time to check his fall without injuring him, so as soon as I landed I unsnapped my chute and started to run over to where I saw the chute hanging from the tree. When I got in sight of Lt. Flo I saw him standing back from the tree looking up at the parachute. I yelled "Are you hurt Lieutenant?" and he said "No, are you?" We then started to walk over towards the road. Lt. Flo hailed a passing car and left me to guard the parachutes, telling me that he was going over to Fairfield to report the accident."