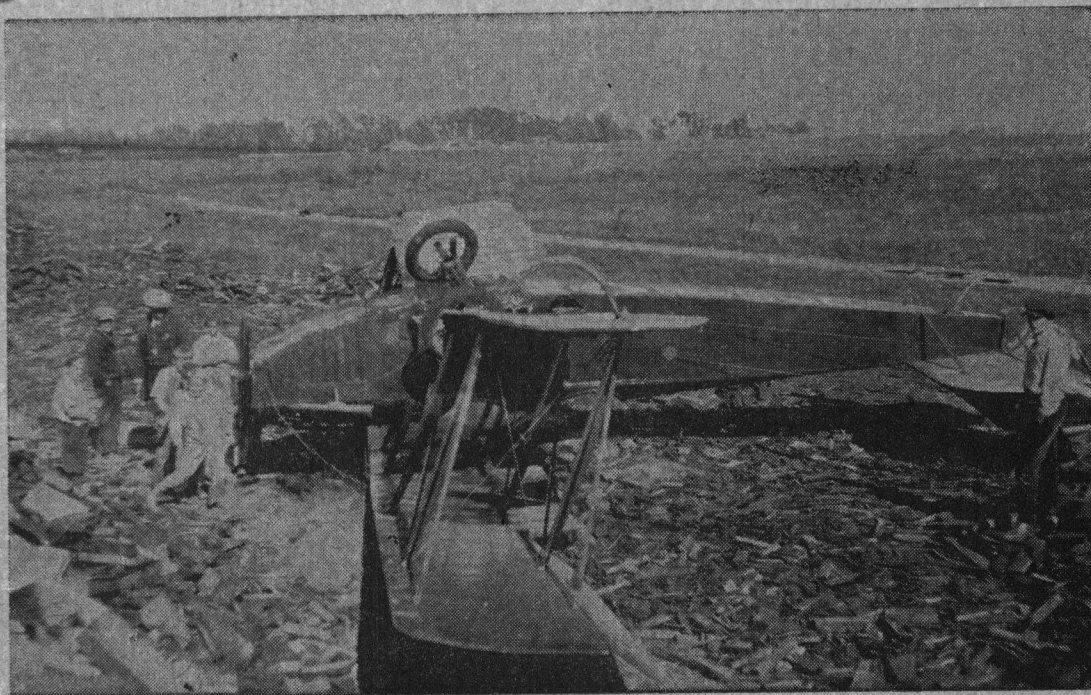


Sunday, July 12, 1953

Santa Cruz Yesterdays



OVERTURF "JENNY" OVERTURNS, JUNE 11, 1923

(From the Preston Sawyer Collection)

One of several aviation mishaps which occurred here during bygone years, especially in flying's "growing up" days, was that pictured above.

Before the establishment of regularly constituted airports, plane pilots sought level-looking open ground—any reasonably flat and weed-clear stretch, upon which to "sit down".

Post-World War I barnstorming pilots, who went from town to town, engaged use of open fields from which to carry, at \$5 (or \$10) a head, for 20-minute flights over the city, any adventuresome local citizenry willing to "risk all".

Early Flying Fields

Many a daring Santa Cruzan went on his first airplane ride in the 1919-1924 period, from such makeshift flying fields as the Younger

ranch, along the Coast road at west city limits; a field adjoining the Live Oak school; another at East Twin Lakes (near the street car line), or on Frederick street, inside the city limits.

Orval "Red" Overturf had been a motorcop, but then was engaging in commercial aviation. He was proud of his \$1800 worth of Curtiss JN4D2, an ex-World War I "Jenny" training plane with a 90 HP V-8 water-cooled engine.

With his partner, Charles Kruse, and two other friends in an accompanying plane, "Red" had made the flight to this city from their headquarters in Palo Alto in 22 minutes. They came late on a Monday afternoon in June, 1923, hoping to have a swim in the surf.

The aviators made a landing about six o'clock in a field adjacent

to the old Ocean Shore railroad and not far from the San Vicente mill, which was off West Cliff drive, not far from Mission street.

Hit Redwood Slabs

Kruse and Overturf were not satisfied with the field as a take-off ground. So they cranked up to cross over to the field south of the right-of-way. They got started nicely but for some reason didn't reach high enough to clear piles of redwood slabs alongside the railroad.

Their undercarriage struck the slabs, damaging the landing wheels, and the biplane nosed over, ending up in the unorthodox position shown. The men were pitched out uninjured, but the "Jenny" lost its propeller. There was other damage, not too serious. The motor and fuselage escaped almost without a scratch.