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Alumni Staff Members: George Souris, Assistant Editor, '47; Ted Beard, '21, Riding the Range; Harold Keith, '29, Sooner Sports; Mrs. Billie Tidwell, War Records; Betty McLean, Roll Call; Mrs. Mary Turnbull, Alumni Records; Lui Antonelli, '41, mailing, and Dr. S. E. Torsten Lund, September Contributing Editor.

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The Aviation Future of O.U.

By DR. S. E. TORSTEN LUND

Former Acting Manager, Max Westheimer Airport

With the recent acquisition of the Norman Naval Air Station, the University of Oklahoma has fully entered into the air age.

In addition to a much needed expansion of its housing and classroom facilities, the University now has an adequate modern airport. However, the mere possession of an airport, with the usual flight facilities, does not guarantee the development of a comprehensive program of aviation training and research.

The four-fold purpose of this article is: (1) to list the physical resources the University now has, (2) to indicate the kind of aviation program the University may institute this fall, (3) to suggest the University's place in promoting aviation, and (4) to point out some of the problems the University will face. Oklahoma is an ideal place for flying from the standpoint of location, weather and terrain. Every indication points to the fact that Oklahoma is rapidly becoming an aviation center.



DR. S. E. T. LUND

The Flying Farmers organization daily is demonstrating the practical use of aviation in farming and ranching. The recent decision to move the Standardization Center of the Civil Aeronautics Administration to Will Rogers Field at Oklahoma City is sound evidence of Oklahoma's central location and suitability for flight.

With the building of the many new airports and airparks now being planned, most of Oklahoma's towns will soon have some kind of landing field available.

The Max Westheimer Field, as a part of the University, is destined to play a very important part in Oklahoma's aviation future, and ought to become the State Airport of Oklahoma.

The Max Westheimer Field is located on the new North Campus, which covers an area of more than 1,600 acres. The field itself contains four 5,000 foot hard surfaced runways, each 200 feet wide, as well as a large hard-surfaced landing mat 2,200 by 2,000 feet.

Two huge hangars, a flight operations building, and a modern traffic control tower provide adequate facilities for both large and small flight operations.

Of special interest to football fans who wish to fly to the games are the concrete ramps on which more than 300 airplanes can be tied down at one time.

A modern wind tetrahedron, up-to-date equipment for night flying, and a compass-swinging turn table, are all designed to promote safe flying in Oklahoma and are provided as a public service to aviation and at no cost.

Other facilities, found on the North Campus supplementing the Max Westheimer Field, are especially attractive to the flyer. Among the facilities provided for his convenience are a modern cafeteria, an indoor swimming pool, tennis courts, handball courts, three complete skeet-shooting ranges, a recreation hall and theater, and auditorium facilities for conferences and other meetings, state-wide or local, within walking distance of the airport.

Realizing that its responsibility in the promotion of aviation is not limited to the mere operation of an airport, the University, which is, after all, an educational institution, is planning to enter the field of aviation education.

Two curricula have already been proposed and probably will be in operation this fall. The first is an Aeronautical Engineering course, giving basic training for the various specialties in aeronautical engineering and requiring flight instruction up to the level of a private pilot license. The second, which also requires flight training, is a course in Airport Management taught in the College of Business Administration.

Furthermore, it has been proposed that any student in the University may take a private pilot's course of flight instruction as one of his elective subjects.

Aviation research is another field in which the University expects to make continued progress. One such research project, a comprehensive study of airport accounting methods, has already been approved and is under way. The possibility of doing research in the field of aviation psychology is also being explored.

In the development of its aviation program, the University is co-operating with Fixed Base Operators through the Oklahoma Aviation Association and the Oklahoma Aviation Commission in providing such research and other services as can be logically undertaken by the University.

Of just as great importance, but much more difficult to solve, is the University's problem of finding it's legitimate place in promoting a general understanding and appreciation of the place of flight in today's world.

As demonstrated in World War II, we are now entering the Air Age. All types of aircraft have been tremendously improved with respect to speed and dependability. Today, no place on earth is more than two days travel distance from us.

Within the useable atmosphere which surrounds the earth, man has discovered a medium in which all former barriers—mountains, rivers, oceans, deserts—have been removed. Thus, man has a new freedom of motion he has never before known.

In this new world which he is just beginning to explore, man finds that his old habits of thinking and his social, economic and political institutions, which previously tied him to the ground, are no longer suitable for effective living in the Air Age. At the same time, his surface dominated experience renders him less capable of critically appraising himself and his institutions in light of the new era.

Therein lies the great challenge to the University. The University must lend every effort to meet it and be prepared to provide the research and training the state citizens will need in the Air Age. As a result, every department of the University will be affected. Faculty members, therefore, should know and understand the importance of flight in the affairs of men, and as such an understanding is practically impossible without some

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The Cover

Leslie Jeannette Bell, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William W. Bell, was one of the entrants in the Baby Contest and Diaper Derby held on August 17 in the Union Ballroom at the University. At the "ripe old age" of eight months, Miss Bell has fixed ideas, and in the cover picture she gives her impression of a certain professor of photography in the O. U. School of Journalism.

Miss Bell was born in Amarillo, Texas. Her father, a veteran of three and a half years in the Army Air Corps, served as an engineer-gunner over Africa and Italy. Mr. Bell, who hails from Pampa, Texas, is now a freshman at the University. He plans to major in journalism.

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