

WRECK OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST AIRPLANE



GREATEST FLYING-BOAT IN THE WORLD, BUILT
TO CARRY ONE HUNDRED PASSENGERS.

It will interest Americans to know that Caproni selected Liberty motors for this huge craft.

THE CAPRONI TRIPLANES which made nightly bombing raids over Germany during the war were so huge that a tractor was required to haul them from their hangars. With a crew of five men and a ton of bombs they were capable of cruising hundreds of miles into enemy territory. After the armistice, then, what could be more natural than that the inventor and builder of the Caproni war-plane should utilize his experience and knowledge in designing and constructing a Caproni triplane on a larger scale, substituting passengers for bombs? This Caproni did, building a "flying-ship" that would carry, he estimated, a hundred persons. As we are told in *The Scientific American* (New York):

"The Caproni machine proves to be a seaplane of radically—indeed, one might well say daring—design. It has three sets of triplanes arranged in tandem and mounted above a long boat body. There are eight motors of the Liberty type, aggregating 3,200 horse-power. The machine weighs 30,800 pounds empty, and can carry a useful load of 22,000 pounds. This useful load factor, when translated in terms of commercial utility, means carrying 100 passengers with sufficient fuel supply for a flight of five to six hours. Beyond a doubt, this is the largest heavier-than-air machine so far constructed. The speed is about ninety miles an hour when the engines are operating at full power.

"The boatlike body, which has accommodations for 100 passengers, measures 66 feet long. The wings measure 132 feet in span. They have a total carrying surface of 7,150 square feet. The arrangement of the three sets of triplanes is said to give this giant machine remarkable stability in the air, and permits of dispensing with the usual tail construction. Each wing carries an *aileron*, and it is the manipulation of these *ailerons* that controls the ascent or descent of the machine. The steering is controlled by eight rudders which are mounted between the wings of the rear triplane. Great stress is laid on the automatic stability of this machine, which is gained by the triplane and tandem arrangement, and the facility with which it can be piloted. And then it follows, too, that with the great weight and horse-power back of this machine it is not apt to be disturbed by the very winds that hamper the smaller airplanes. The Caproni giant, in flying trim, represents twenty-five tons."

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"SOMETHING WENT WRONG." VIEW OF THE GREAT "TRANSATLANTIC"
PLANE AFTER ITS SECOND TRIAL TRIP.

The Italian inventor planned to cross the Atlantic in this giant flying-boat. On the first trial flight over Lake Maggiore the huge triplane flew for a mile or more about twenty-five feet above the water, showing that the eight Liberty engines were powerful enough, and that apparently the machine was a success in every way. On the second flight, however, according to the *London Times*, "something went wrong" as the machine alighted on Lake Maggiore, and the hull was damaged beyond repair, but the pilot was not injured. Says the editor of *The Aeroplane* (London):

"The unofficial report is that the pilot, Sembrini, a very good and experienced aviator, took the machine off the water, got her up to about sixty feet, and that then she gently put her nose down and continued so till she drove it under water. Considering that she had four Liberty engines on her forward planes and four more aft, with very small elevators and yards of space between the engine-masses, it must have been very difficult to counteract her enormous longitudinal moment of inertia, and so the story has every semblance of truth."

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