

This month we present the really rare ships of World War I - the one-shot American single-seaters. None of these except the Curtiss S-3 ever got beyond the prototype stage, and of course, none saw action. In spite of these conditions, they still hold a place of interest for the World War I fan whose interest covers the development of the airplane through the war years of 1914 to 1919, and not just the "War-plane" collector who is interested only in the mass-produced "Standard" types or those that were the War Chariots of certain famous Aces,

CURTISS S-1 Developed as a private venture by Curtiss for "Scouting" purposes long before the term "Pursuit" came into being. In late 1914, the single-seater was considered as an aerial extension of cavalry, to be used for scouting behind the enemy lines, hence the term "Scout" as applied to what later became "Fighter" or "Pursuit" planes. The S-1 was of all wood construction, fabric covered, and was powered with a 90-100 HP Curtiss V-8 watercooled engine, either an OX or an OXX model, (Curtiss Photo)

CURTISS S-2 A direct development of the S-1, in which an attempt was made to simplify the rigging problem by adopting "Wireless" construction. Of even greater interest is the open-front prop spinner to let cooling air get to the radiator.(Curtiss Photo)

CURTISS S-3 A further development of the S-1 and S-2 that resulted in a "Production" airplane, since the U.S. Army bought four of them. Powered by a 100 HP Curtiss OXX-2, the S-3's were not ordinarily fitted with guns although synchronized guns had been used in the European war for over a year before the S-3 appeared late in 1916. The two guns shown here are Lewises, and are mounted to fire over the propeller arc, (Curtiss Photo)

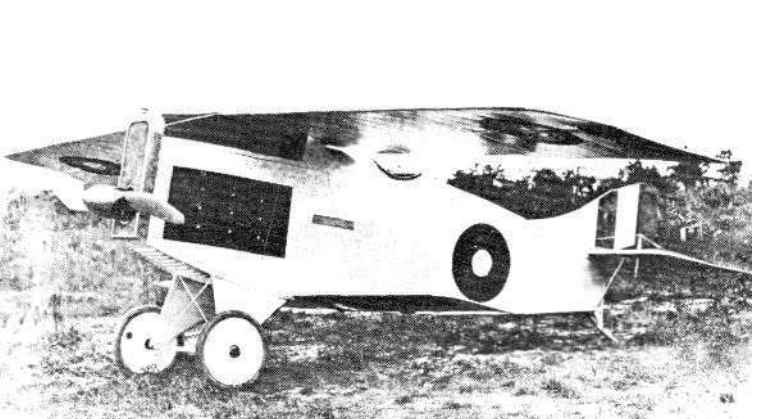
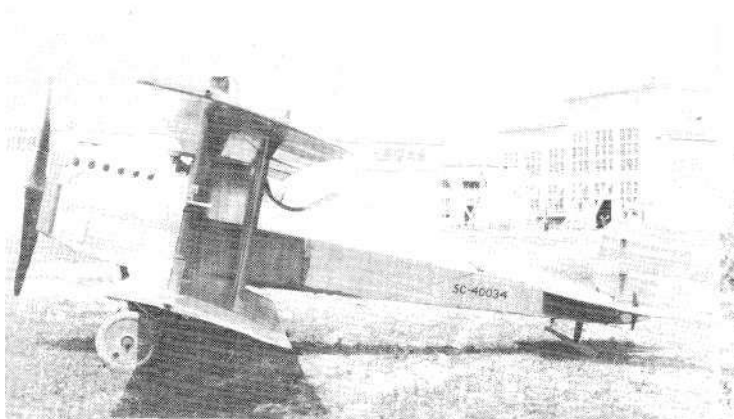
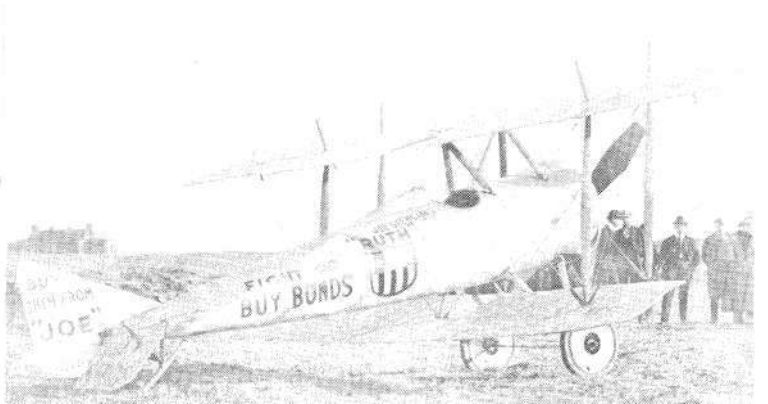
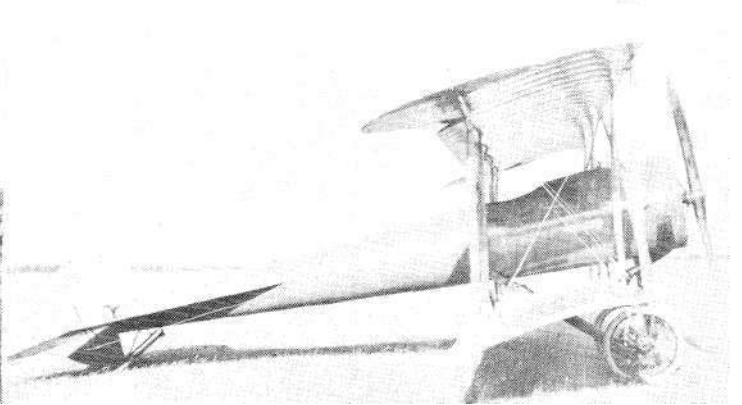
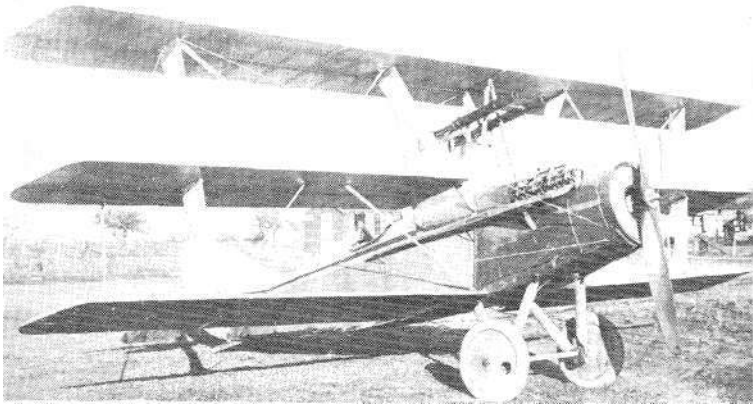
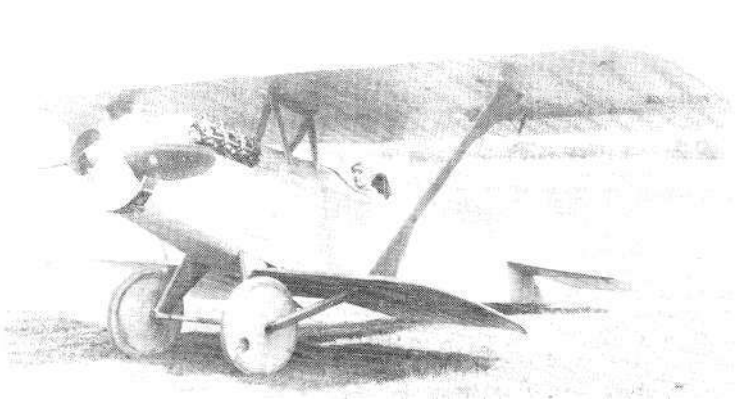
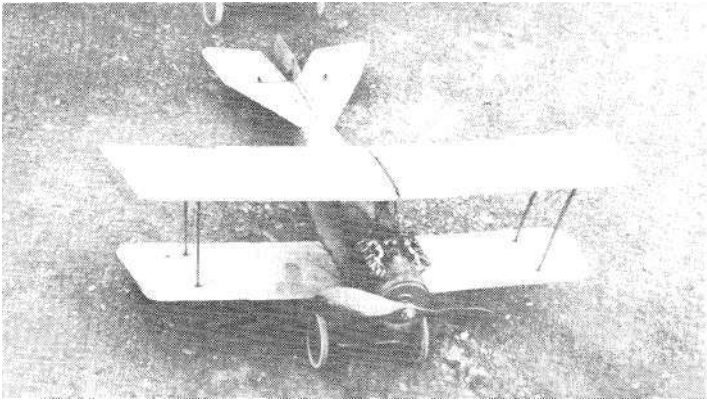
LONGREN Little is available on this rotary-engined model other than the photo, It appears to be of about 1914-15 vintage, judging by the "prewar" single-surface airfoil. The fuselage appears to be built up of laminated wood veneer, a system that was being tried by several manufacturers of the time, Longren built several folding wing single seat biplanes for the Navy shortly after WW-I, using the same fuselage construction, and turned out other lightplane designs into the early 1930's. (Manufacturer's Photo)

STURTEVANT This manufacturer had supplied numbers of steel-framo trainers to both the Army and Navy in 1916, and used the same construction when developing this single seater. The wing construction was not pure "Wireless" as in the case of the Curtiss S-2, for external drag wires were used. Power was supplied by a 135-150 HP Sturtevant V-8 watercooled engine. (Manufacturer's Photo)

BERKMANN Another laminated wood veneer fuselage design, powered by a 100 HP Gnome rotary built by the General Vehicle Company. The markings show that this civilian-owned plane was allowed to fly about the country after the declaration of war in April 1917 to assist with the War Bond Drives, Civil flying was not banned until quite a while after the US got into the war. (Original photo source unknown)

LANZIUS A large single seater not developed as a scout or fighter, but to test a variable-camber wing design. (AMC Photo)

CHRISTMAS BULLET Even though it didn't fly until 1919, this can be called a WW-I ship. Powered with a 200 HP Hall-Scott Liberty six, the Bullet did 222 MPH in March, 1919a Principal feature of the design was the flexible wing combined with a variable-camber airfoil. Wings drooped as shown on the ground, but had positive dihedral in flight as well as sweeping back under increased air loads. (Manufacturer's Photo)



Christmas "Bullet"