

AVIATION

Flying Records Announced

The Army Air Forces have established new world records with standard production-line airplanes, including the new jet fighter and the helicopter.

► NEW WORLD aviation records have been established by the Army Air Forces. They were made by standard, currently operational, production-line aircraft stripped only of armament. Some of the records were established at Wright Field, Ohio, others in load-altitude tests, with B-29 aircraft at Guam.

On April 19, a Lockheed Shooting Star, the P-80, made a record of 495 miles per hour over a 62-mile low-level run from Wright Field to Jeffersonville, Ohio, and return, losing much time in slowing down to make the turn at its half-way point. This beat the existing record by over 100 miles an hour.

A month later a P-80 flew a 1,000 kilometer (approximately 621 miles) course and a 2,000 kilometer course at an average speed of 440 miles an hour. The previous record was 325 miles an hour. The 2,000-kilometer trip was made at 35,000-foot altitude, and over half the way had inclement weather which made it necessary to fly on instruments "talked around" by radar operators who followed the plane on their radar screens.

This 440-mile record over the 621-mile turn-around course was shattered on June 3 by a Shooting Star which flew the same route at an average speed of 462 miles an hour.

Six records were broken on May 17 by the famous Boeing B-29. They are:

Speed over a 1,000 kilometer course with 1,000 kilogram (2,205 pounds) payload, 369 miles per hour; previous record 326 mph.

Speed over a 2,000 kilometer course with 1,000 kilogram payload, 366 mph; previous record, 311 mph.

Over 2,000 kilometer course with 2,000 kilogram payload, the same as the above with the same previous record.

Over a 2,000 kilometer course with 5,000 kilogram payload, 366 mph, bettering the earlier record of 251 mph.

Over a 1,000 kilometer course with a 5,000 kilogram payload, 369 mph. 110 miles more than the standing record.

Over a 1,000 kilometer route with 2,000 kilograms of load, 369 mph, as compared with a previous 321 miles per hour.

On the same day another B-29 covered a 1,000 kilometer course with a payload of 10,000 kilograms averaging 358 miles per hour, and a 2,000 kilometer course with the same load at an average speed of 356 miles an hour. Previous records were 207 and 205 miles per hour respectively.

A helicopter duration performance was broken on May 13 when a Sikorsky R-5 remained in the air nine hours, 33 minutes and 27 seconds. The earlier record was one hour and 32 minutes.

On May 22, an R-5 helicopter made a non-stop flight from Wright Field to Boston in 10 hours and three minutes. It is a record for helicopter distance. On June 3, a Sikorsky-5A made a new international speed record of 110.5 miles an hour, the previous world record being slightly over 76 miles.

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Oregon ash belongs to the olive family; besides the edible olive, this family includes the lilacs, forsythias, and the privets.

HERPETOLOGY

Snake Buried in Sand Is New Desert Danger

► RATTLESNAKES buried in the sand offer a new hazard in the desert. A sidewinder, which is a rattlesnake that does not coil like others of its breed, but before striking makes a figure S with its head, was caught in the act of submerging itself beneath the California desert sand by Dr. Raymond B. Cowles of the University of California at Los Angeles.

"When bedding down, the sidewinder forms a tight coil or pad," Dr. Cowles states, "and then proceeds to edge or nudge the sand outward from beneath its body. It thus forms a saucer-shaped depression in which it lies with the back of its body flush with the surrounding surface."

While some snakes may wiggle down into the sand, others may become covered by wind-blown sand. Sidewinders, mostly active at night, usually bury themselves in sand during the daytime or come to rest on the shady side of a tree or bush.

North African vipers, Old World counterparts of the California desert sidewinder, are known to bury themselves in the sand. But in 15 to 20 years of collecting snakes and lizards, Dr. Cowles remained skeptical about the sidewinder until he actually saw one so buried.

Science News Letter, June 15, 1946



RECORD BREAKER—The Republic Thunderjet, new XP-84 jet fighter, has just been revealed by the army. Its speed is more than 590 miles per hour, and it has a service range of 1,000 miles and ceiling above 40,000 feet.