

AEROPLANES AND DIRIGIBLE BALLOONS IN WARFARE

The chapter outlines significant advancements and events in the early days of aviation, particularly focusing on the practical use of airplanes and dirigible balloons within the realms of competition and warfare. It begins with recounting two notable races: a flight from New York to Philadelphia won by L. Beachey in a Curtiss machine with an average speed of 45 miles per hour, and a more demanding tri-state race culminating in E. Ovington's victory in a Bleriot machine, which earned him a \$10,000 prize.

The narrative then transitions into a detailed discussion on the role of flying machines in military applications. It highlights the enthusiastic adoption of aircraft technology by the leading world powers for both experimental and operational purposes.

Governments have not only been purchasing aeroplanes but also establishing instructional schools for their military personnel. France and Germany are noted for having the largest airship fleets, which includes dirigibles equipped for extensive ranges and capable of carrying significant payloads.

A British naval airship, notable for its size and lifting capacity, is mentioned as a recent completion, underscoring the international effort to advance aerial capabilities. The text deliberates on the comparative merits of dirigibles and aeroplanes in warfare, acknowledging the safety and range advantages of the former, despite notable disasters, and the proven utility of aeroplanes in reconnaissance and communications, as demonstrated by Italian military operations in Tripoli.

Further, the potential of aircraft to revolutionize war tactics is discussed, with contemplation on their ability to scout enemy movements, identify naval formations,

and even the debated utility of deploying airborne explosives. Innovations like converting aeroplanes to operate with floats for water landings and takeoffs illustrate the evolving adaptability of flying machines, highlighting remarkable feats by aviators like Mr. Curtiss.

This chapter showcases an era where aviation was rapidly becoming integral to both commercial competition and military strategy, marking a significant period of technological innovation and tactical exploration in the early 20th century.

