

# WORLD'S GREATEST SWORDSMAN FOUGHT LAST DUEL IN AIR

## Reuzier Dorcieres, One of Most Picturesque Figures in Parisian Life: Gentleman Duellist Makes Supreme Sacrifice Serving With French Aviation Corps

For a generation Reuzier Dorcieres has been one of the most picturesque figures in Parisian life, holding the unique position of the dean of duellists. A dinner was given to him in April, 1911, by two hundred and fifty men, every one of whom had either fought a duel with him, been his or his opponent's second in a duel, been seconded by him, or had participated as principal or second in a duel he "directed." All told, he had been director of 267 sword or pistol combats, and of the occasions on which he had played the role of second he had completely lost count. He himself had fought no fewer than twenty-five duels, fifteen with the sword and ten with the pistol.

It is not surprising, then, that such a firebrand volunteered to serve France in arms when the war broke out, though he had passed the age limit set by the order of mobilization. Brief newspaper bulletins announced that fact at the time, and added that he had been attached to the aviation service.

A few months ago bulletins equally brief announced that Reuzier Dorcieres, French military aviator, was "missing" as presumably either dead or wounded. No further details have been given of his fate until this story of the dramatic end of a remarkable man.

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Paris, Aug. 3—France—some say the world's—champion duellist is dead. Dead, too, in a duel that was far different from any other clash of arms in which he had ever participated. For a coughing, spitting, flashing machine gun was the weapon used, and it was the gushing steam of steel-nosed, leaden pellets instead of the tip of a shining rapier that inflicted the mortal wounds.

Reuzier Dorcieres was a composite of d'Artagnan and Cyrano de Bergerac in Paris before the great war flamed over Europe in August, 1914. He was the victor in more than a score of duels, and in a certain number of these encounters—no one could ever agree on the exact figure—he had "got" his man. Besides he had acted as second more than a hundred times.

Reuzier Dorcieres was not the most skilled swordsman in Europe, though no other man of his time had occasion as often to place his faith and hope of life in a slender steel blade.

But what little he lacked in this science of swordsmanship was more than offset by his dash and daring and strength of arm and wrist.

More than a year later Reuzier Dorcieres appeared again on the boulevards. Gone were his high-crowned, flapping brimmed black felt hat, his twining moustache, his long imperial, his flowing tie. Instead he wore a steel helmet, a horizon blue tunic, buttoned up to the throat, and his moustache was trimmed to a "Charlie Chaplin toothbrush." On his collar and right arm were the winged insignia of the aviation service.

Those of the "old crowd" who were left, gathered him unto themselves and carted him off to one of the cafes where before the war he had been in daily attendance. They arranged a dinner for him, and the proprietor placed them in a private salon upstairs, that they need not be forced to curtail their festivities at 10.30 o'clock, then, the closing hour.

It was after dinner, cigarettes, cigars, even pipes among the "milliardaires" were lighted and the cognac and fine champagne was before each guest. Came a lull in the conversation.

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tion, and all eyes turned toward Reuzier Dorcieres, silently asking the question that had been pondering for you know that a year ago.

Slowly, as if in answer to this unput question, the airman rose to his feet.

"You are wondering, my friends," he began, "why at the age of thirty-nine, I voluntarily enlisted in the army, and why I chose to enter the aviation service, distinctly the place for a youth. You are wondering why I have never told you. Ecoutez!"

"You have always believed that I have never suffered an affront in my life; that he who dared impugn me or mine, or who showed disrespect enough to Reuzier Dorcieres—even by jostling him in passing his table on the field of honor."

"It is true. More than a score of times such things have happened to me. More than a score of times I have appeared at the quiet places you know of at daybreak. More than a score of times I have stripped to the waist and waited for the handkerchief of the referee to drop to the ground and more than a score of times I have seen the blood of my adversary which has trickled across his bare skin, a silent, living apology for the thing he had done."

"But there was one time when I was insulted—grossly—and the man who did it escaped me."

Begin, Two Years Ago.

"Do you remember the winter, five years ago, that I passed in Switzerland? It was there, when I was staying in Zurich, that the thing occurred. It was after dinner. I was sipping my chateaufort, gazing at the crowd when the man sitting next to me nudged my shoulder. Without so much as an apology for intruding on me he began:

"So you are Reuzier Dorcieres," he said. "I recognize you. And they say you have never been touched in a duel. Well, I am sorry I never had the good fortune to meet you in one." Then he laughed a sneering laugh.

"My blood boiled. 'But you will

have the chance to meet me, tomorrow morning,' I replied, glaring at him for his insolence. And then as I surveyed his countenance I saw the answer for his piggishness. He was a Prussian."

"No," he answered me, "I will not be able to avail myself of the pleasure of measuring swords with you, as I leave for Germany on the midnight train. I am attached to the Imperial Aviation Corps and must report at Johannisthal to-morrow."

"I looked at my watch. It was but a few minutes after 10 o'clock. I could not let the wretched creature escape after his affront. Then I will teach you your lesson to-night," I told him. "There are four hours before your train leaves, and after I am through with you, you will care little about your petty business at Johannisthal."

"His face darkened. I thought at the time he was a brave man even though he was a German. 'Mon-sieur,' he said, 'I shall meet you here before 10 o'clock, with my seconds and the swords. We will settle this affair before I depart. Will you await me?'

"Would I await him? My heart leaped with joy at the prospect. I bowed with pleasure as he stalked from the restaurant to make his plans. And then whom did I see sitting near me but our old friend, the Comte de B—, as fine a second as any man ever had. In two words I had recounted the incident and called on him to act in my behalf.

Waited Eight Days.

"I waited in that restaurant with the Comte until 11 o'clock. The Prussian officer did not appear. Then I stood there scrutinizing every person who passed through the gates to board the midnight train, but he was not one of them. At 1 o'clock in the morning I went to my hotel and retired. I remained in Zurich for eight days seeking the miserable coward and then returned to Paris.

"Although I tore up and cast away the card he had given me, I never forgot his name. Two years afterwards I read in a despatch from Berlin of his being breveted as an aviator and I went to the railroad station from time to time, I read or heard from people from Germany, of how he was working in the service of the German Army."

"That is why I entered the aviation service of France. Because I still hoped to meet him and make him repay his debt of honor to me."

Reuzier Dorcieres sat amid a silence that hung heavy round the board. One by one his friends approached him, wrung his hands and kissed both his cheeks, as Frenchmen do. "He stood up, saluted stiffly and strode out of the room. That night he left Paris and returned to the front as a machine gunner in a fighting aeroplane."

The Story of the Duel.

Now Reuzier Dorcieres is dead. He has fought his last duel. He has cleaned his slate of its one blot. And he has died in so doing.

His pilot, the pilot who operated the aeroplane in which Reuzier Dorcieres manned the gun, told this story. "Told it to the same coterie of friends who had listened to Dorcieres' explanation of his motive in joining the aviation service more than a year before."

"He told me to find you, Messieurs and to tell you just what he told me as he lay lying in glory. 'I never machine gun bullets which rattled his torso in that last combat, which nearly cost me' also, my life."

"Reuzier Dorcieres was the strangest machine gunner I ever had with me. Unlike other gunners he always carried binoculars, and when we sighted and approached a Boche aeroplane he spent his preliminary time in peering intently at the occupants of the enemy machine instead of preparing and testing his gun, anxiously, as most gunners do."

"As we circled near the German machine in his last fight, Dorcieres passed me a scrap of paper. On it he had scrawled a request that I swoop past the German as near as I could. Instantly I divined his reason and his reason for always carrying and using his high power glasses. He thought he recognized one of the occupants of the other machine."

"I swerved and doubled and shot past the Kokker's tail. Dorcieres' eyes had been riveted to the glasses and he dropped them now heedlessly and they smashed in the bottom of the fuselage."

"Dorcieres' right hand was on the trigger of the quick firing gun and his left was feeding the cartridge belt cleanly into the loading chamber as we rounded and flashed by, abreast, but a little higher than the enemy."

"Taca-tac-pouf - pouf-tac-pouf-pouf—and he drove thirty rounds at the Kokker. And then as I swerved the Boche turned upward and let fly at us. He had been travelling faster than I thought because my mind had been distracted by approaching too near him at Dorcieres' request and he reached us with every shot from his machine gun. Our fuselage cracked and splintered as the leaden hail perforated the car and the choking gasps that I heard behind me were the positive indication that my gunner had been hit."

"I too turned upward as my motor was undamaged, and climbed with the German. Then we both planned and approached each other, and the test was which of the two machine gunners would prove to be the better man."

"When I saw afterwards how terribly Dorcieres had been hit in the first exchange of firing I realized that my apprehension as to the outcome was unnecessary. When a man in his condition can hold his own with the gun at all he is invincible. I heard my machine gun begin to spit at the extra fraction of a second that we came within range and the enemy gun never once barked a reply. Our first shot must have killed the enemy gunner. And our torrent of bullets ripped off the fall of the Fokker and he dived like a stone into our lines nose down."

"I plucked down too and landed within fifty yards of the broken

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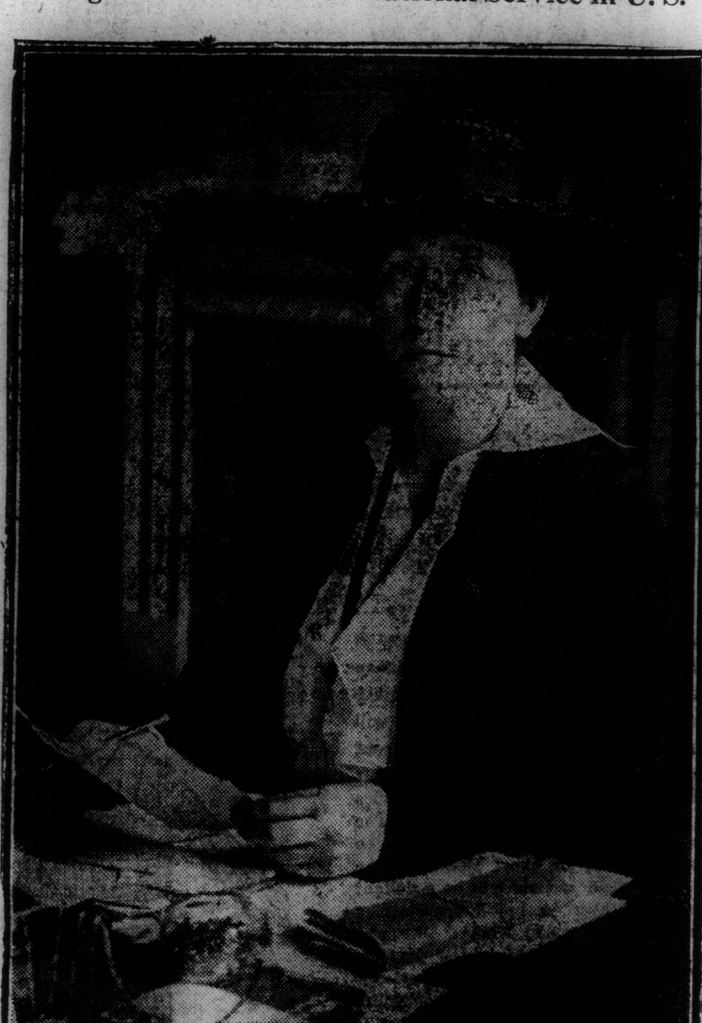
On and after August 10th next the local regulation giving the right of way to vehicles going north and south over those going east and west will be cancelled, and the following amendment to the Highway Travel Act substituted therefor:

"Where a person travelling or being upon a highway in charge of a vehicle or on horseback, meets another vehicle or person on horseback, at a crossroad or intersection, the vehicle or horseman to the right hand of the other vehicle or horseman shall have the right of way."

Drivers of all vehicles are therefore requested to note carefully the amendment to the law and govern themselves accordingly. By order, Brantford, August 1st, 1917.

CHAS. SLEMIN, Chief Constable.

## Organizes Women For National Service in U. S.



Miss Grace Parker, president of the National League for Women's Service in the United States, who is organizing the women force of that country so that their efforts will be centred in National Service.

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## AIRPLANES TO BE DECIDING FACT IN WINNING

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Kiel Canal Could Be Cdered Useless By Air

(From the New York Times)  
"It is the new thing that we call air power," said Brig. Gen. George H. Kiehl, chief signal officer of the United States army, in charge of aerial operations, who both as a scientist and soldier, spent time at John Hopkins university, the efficiency of the army's national defense ever since graduated from West Point after which he spent five years at John Hopkins university. It was Gen. Squier who in United States telegraph system in the Philippines, and was military attache of the American embassy in London. As chief signal officer of the particular new thing he has in mind as the agency for winning present war is the use of air in such numbers that they are invincible that all the interior and other vital resort Germany for continuing the war is at the mercy of the allied Kiel Canal would be a refuge of the enemy fleet.

To say that the airplane new, that it was a practical long before the beginning of war, is beside the mark. The new is in quantity. Gen. Squier of airplanes for the purpose in mind in about the same technical terms that soldiers of the time when reference to 1904 Gen. Squier will not use figures himself, but he figuratively speaking, he has over the walls of the nequart the Signal Corps at the war department is "Enough planes to Germany."

"Just how many that will be said," depends primarily on many. Von Hindenburg has as anybody else, perhaps more, with the formulating of our. We cannot have any specific day. That is the difficulty. We to make clear to the loyal a triotic business men who are big by ready to help us in man-uring. They are men who enormous quantities, and they customized to predict the needed output for normal peacetime a long way in advance we cannot do that in war. We be ready to make quick shifts, at times to assume all the responsibility for appearing incohesive soldier who cannot reverse his from-day to day, if necessary

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We can carry the war-debt if the bulk of the interest goes to Canadians, and so used again in the country's development. But it will be a serious matter for us if a large proportion of the interest has to be sent outside the Dominion.

For the sake of our own and our children's future this drain on our resources must be avoided. Canada's financial freedom can and must be maintained! An average saving of 15 cents a day, invested by each man, woman, and child in Canada in War Savings Certificates, would enable us to carry the whole cost of the war. To approach this average, hard work, thrift, self-denial and sacrifice are required of every citizen.

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