

Aircraft in the Great War

craft in a shattering impact, and involving himself and his opponent in what must prove almost inevitably a fatal fall. But in actual fighting, as seen in this campaign, there has been one instance only of such a desperate and despairing move. Nor is this surprising. The pilot who charges another machine, when at a high altitude, knows he is flying to almost certain death; there is not even a sporting chance of his being able to escape with his life. Few men would be willing thus to relinquish hope. And there should be no need for them to do so. From almost any predicament, during an aerial duel, there should be some chance for a pilot to extricate himself.

In the only case of attempted "ramming" that is on record, a German airman drove his craft against that of a Frenchman. The French machine, a biplane, was patrolling near Amiens. A sergeant-aviator was in control, while a lieutenant, flying with him as a passenger and observer, was armed with a small machine-gun. The German aeroplane was sighted when at some distance, and the Frenchman went in chase of it. The French biplane proved the faster craft, and the German was overtaken while above a village named Cailly, over which he was dropping bombs. The French pilot brought his craft within range, whereupon the lieutenant, operating his machine-gun, fired a hundred shots at the German without registering a vital hit. The latter, whose only weapon