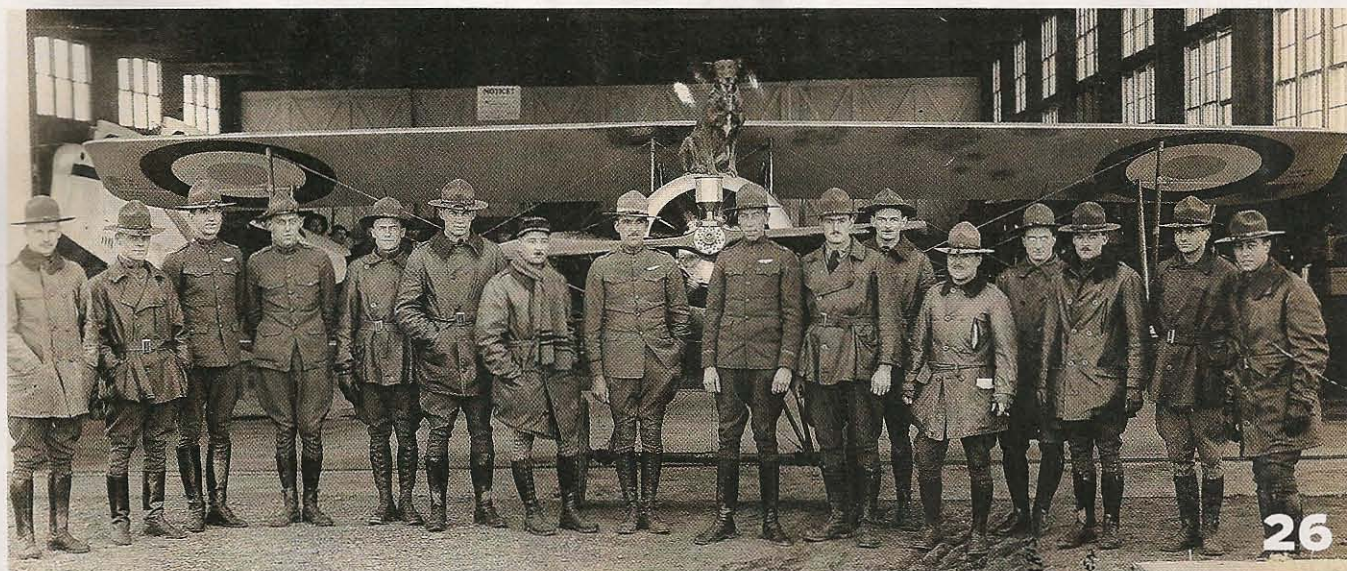




ON THE COVER: During the F-35 flight tests, U.S. Marine Corps pilot Matt "Squirt" Kelly guides his charge toward a KC-10 tanker, into the sights of the air crew and photographer Michael D. Jackson.

BELOW: The pilots of McCook Field tested everything: aircraft, instruments, and nerve (see p. 26).



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If this small ship reaches space, cheaper rides to orbit may follow.

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World's most dangerous job? In the 1920s, it had to be flying for the U.S. Air Service.

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Five missions, five boo-boos, and a few miraculous saves.

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Learning what the F-35 can do.

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Possibly the oddest airplane that ever proved a concept.

BY TIM WRIGHT



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Aviation-inspired artists show off their work.

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Third floor: home furnishings, jewelry, stall-resistant aircraft.

BY PAUL GLENSHAW

58 The Hunt for Houdini's Airplane

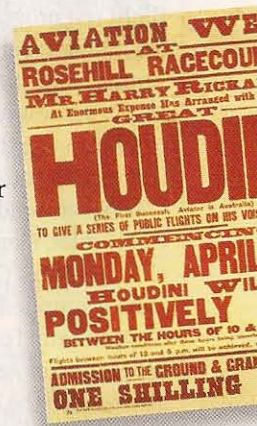
The trail leads to a stage prop designer and his partner's mysterious death.

BY REBECCA MAKSEL

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In the midst of jetliner disasters, score one for the Soviet Union.

BY CRAIG MELLOW



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