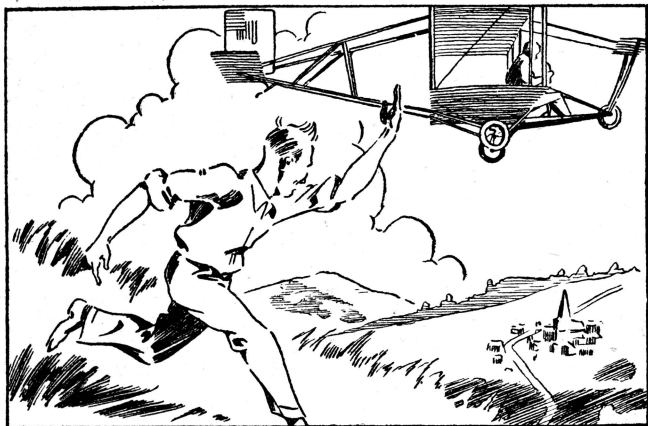


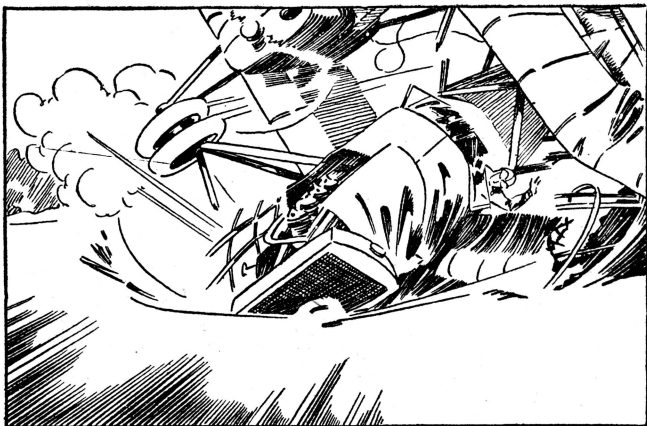
# They Had What It Takes

## XX—JUAN de la CIERVA—'GIRO GENIUS

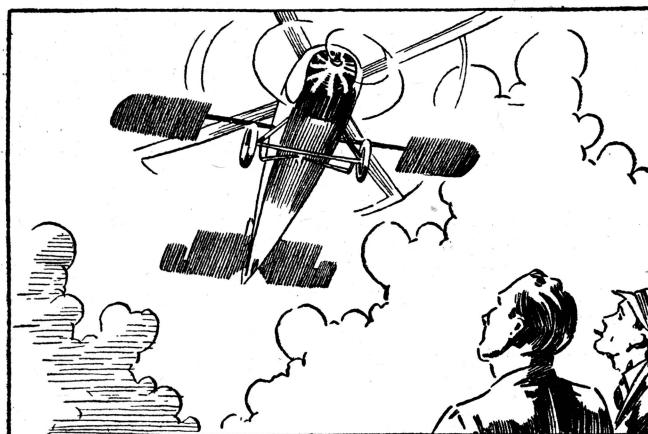
By ALDEN McWILLIAMS



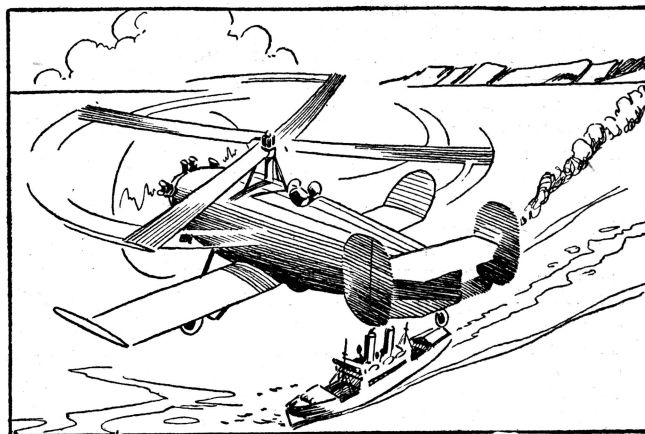
1—Juan de la Cierva was born in Spain in 1895. His father wanted him to go into politics. But young Juan early developed a flair for engineering and designing, and at the age of 15 he became interested in aeronautics and built a glider with the aid of a friend. Pleased when his sky-goer actually "worked", Juan soon constructed another and better glider.



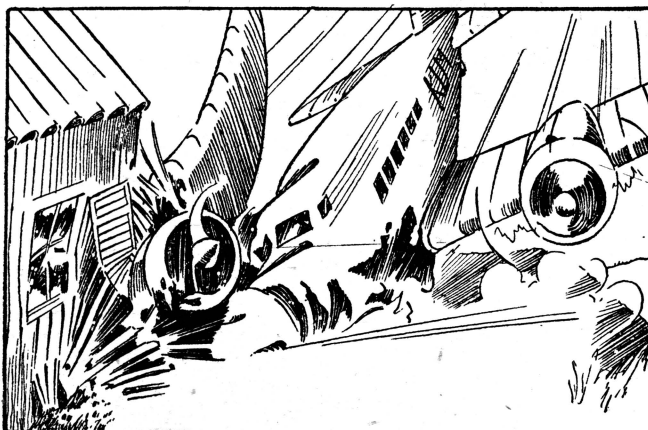
2—Then, in 1912, Cierva built a powered airplane—and this craft was the first to fly in Spanish skies. Six years later, he turned out a tri-engine bomber which carried 16 persons and incorporated a number of advanced features. This huge ship held great promise, but one day in 1919 another pilot "washed it out" when attempting a bank too near the ground.



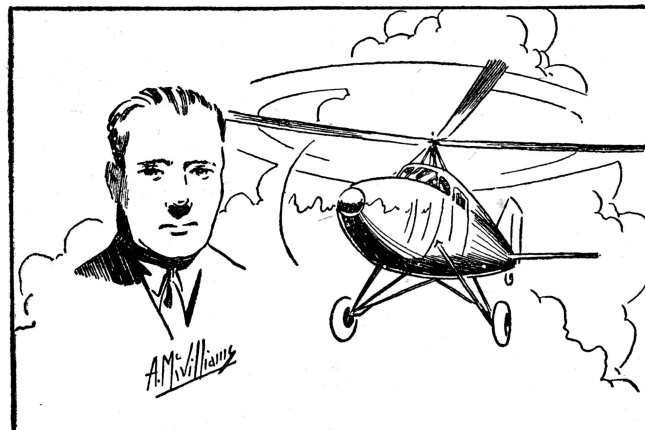
3—This crash turned Cierva's attention to the limitations of fixed-wing planes, and in 1920 he conceived the idea of the rotating-wing autogiro. He built two fixed-rotor craft that same year. The first wouldn't fly; the second proved nose heavy, unstable. Then, in 1922, Cierva developed a movable-blade rotor. And this time his autogiro was a success!



4—By 1925, the aero world began to recognize the great possibilities of the Spaniard's striking ship. Encouraged, Cierva then constructed a series of 'giros. And to prove them practical, he flew one of the novel machines from London to Paris in 1928. The following year, he came to the U.S., teamed up with Pitcairn, and introduced his craft to America.



5—Now the autogiro's success was assured, and additional building licenses were granted. Then improvements allowed removal of the stub wing, brought the self-starting rotor to this "land-on-a-dime" plane. But in 1936, Cierva was killed—not in one of his own super-safe ships but in the crash of a K.L.M. transport near Croydon. It was the mockery of Fate!



6—Courageous designer of a new type plane, Juan de la Cierva won world-wide homage. And that homage was well deserved; for the craft he created has hung up a remarkable record of 3,000,000 flying miles with but one death—that of a test pilot. To Cierva went the Guggenheim award, and the Royal Aeronautical Society honored him with its Silver Medal.