

OBITUARY

CHARLES VOISIN

CHARLES VOISIN succumbed on September 26th to injuries sustained in a motor-car accident near Macon, and with him disappears one of the small and sadly-dwindling band of pioneers who, some six years ago, laid the first stone on which French aerial supremacy has since been raised. Overshadowed to some extent by the more brilliant technical and executive abilities of his brother Gabriel, Charles Voisin nevertheless played an important part in those early moving days of the history of aviation.

Born at Lyon on July 12th, 1884, Charles Voisin, after completing his military service, joined his brother Gabriel in 1906 to found, with the support of M. Ernest Archdeacon, the firm of Voisin Frères, the first aeroplane constructors in the world. After conducting a number of gliding experiments the Voisins resolved to build a motor-driven aeroplane, and, though the only data they possessed were those derived from their own experiments, resolved upon the bold step—remember that but one machine had before then succeeded in making a public flight—of offering a guarantee of flight to the purchaser of their aeroplane. The purchaser, Léon Delagrange, was soon found, and on March 30th, 1907, Charles Voisin made his first flight on the lawns of Bagatelle. The subsequent history of this, the first aeroplane ever built for any but experimental purposes, is well known. It stands to the everlasting credit of Charles Voisin that he collaborated to found the industry of aviation.

Early this year he severed his connection with the firm he had helped to establish, and proceeded to South America to organise the highly successful tour made by Garros, Barrier, and Audemars. Death overtook him shortly after his return, in the midst of his activities, cutting short a career which is not only inseparably bound up with the commencement of aviation, but was fraught with every promise of a useful and active future.

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