

Crash Fatal To Joan Merriam And Friend

Flyers in many parts of the world were saddened recently by the death of globe-circling pilot Joan Merriam Smith (AOPA 103228) in a light-plane crash near Big Pines, Calif. With her in the Cessna 182 when it crashed into the side of a mountain and burned was another AOPA member, Trixie Ann Schubert (AOPA 260030), a Powder Puff Derby entrant, aviation writer and a prominent figure in the California Ninety-Nines. Mrs. Schubert also was fatally injured.

Readers of *The PILOT* will recall Joan's own story of her flight around the world about a year ago; how she determinedly continued to follow the route taken by the late Amelia Earhart in 1937 until her mission was com-

pleted, despite the hard luck that seemed to follow her on the flight. Her account of the flight appeared in the November 1964 issue of *The PILOT*. She was preparing another article for this magazine at the time of her death.

Cause of the accident had not been determined at the time of this writing. It was being investigated by the CAB, FAA and private industry representatives. Weather was not a factor; conditions reportedly were CAVU at the time.

Friends of Joan Merriam, as she was known professionally, were impressed by her courage and her strong desire to promote general aviation. She spent a great deal of her time, following the completion of her world flight, lecturing and showing slides of the world as she saw it from her turbocharged Piper *Apache*. At the time of her death she was working on a program to promote flying among teenagers, she informed *The PILOT* in a letter written a few days before the fatal accident.

A mishap never dampened her love of flying, which dated back to her own teens. After her famous *Apache* crashed and burned last January, a *PILOT* editor called her to find out about her injuries. It was only a few days after the accident.

"Joan," she was asked, "when do you expect to fly again?"

"I've already been up," she said. "Two days after the accident."

"How did it go?"

"I was a little shaky at first, but after a few minutes everything was all right. Nothing is going to keep me on the ground."

After that first flight following the accident, she was eager to get back in the cockpit at every opportunity, close friends in California say. ●

The late Joan Merriam Smith

