

# The NEW BERN MIRROR

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Those of us who treasure fond memories of the old East Carolina Fair ought to applaud the New Bern Junior Chamber of Commerce for the effort it has put forth to bring us its first Craven county Jaycee Fair and Exposition.

Fairs flourish elsewhere in the Old North State every autumn, and it is no credit to this town—nestling in a thriving agricultural locale—that we've failed to keep abreast of other sections in this respect.

We live in a world of change, a world where things once dear to our hearts wither and die, or become outmoded. No one, if he is honest with himself and with others, wants to go back to the horse and buggy days. Even so, the good things in the good old days are worth preserving, and doing away with the "County Fair" is as unthinkable as doing away with Santa Claus.

It is part and parcel of the America we love, and we have our doubts about the progressiveness of a county seat such as ours when it has no annual fair that it can point to with justifiable pride. Counties much smaller than ours, from Manteo to Murphy, have put us to shame. New Bern Jaycees are determined to remove this blemish, and deserve all the support they can get.

Frankly, The Mirror doesn't expect this first Craven county Jaycee Fair and Exposition to be a great event. Outstanding fairs don't blossom overnight, but we're confident that the Jaycees will come up with a very creditable beginning when they present their attraction from October 30 through November 4.

They can accomplish very little without the cooperation of farm families and city folks in our area. If everybody pitches in, the venture will be a success, and grow with each succeeding year. If the project flops, because there's a lack of interest, we seriously doubt that another county fair will be attempted by the Jaycees or anyone else in our generation.

Of course, supporting a County Fair solely through a sense of duty is a poor way to support it. There can be no real support in the fullest sense unless people WANT to support it and ENJOY supporting it.

Lots of folks in this day and time don't know how much fun a County Fair can be. They imagine themselves as being sophisticated, and consider such presentations corny and old-fashioned. Maybe they ARE corny in some respects, and old-fashioned too because they've survived for a long, long time, but some of the nicest things in all the world are corny and old-fashioned.

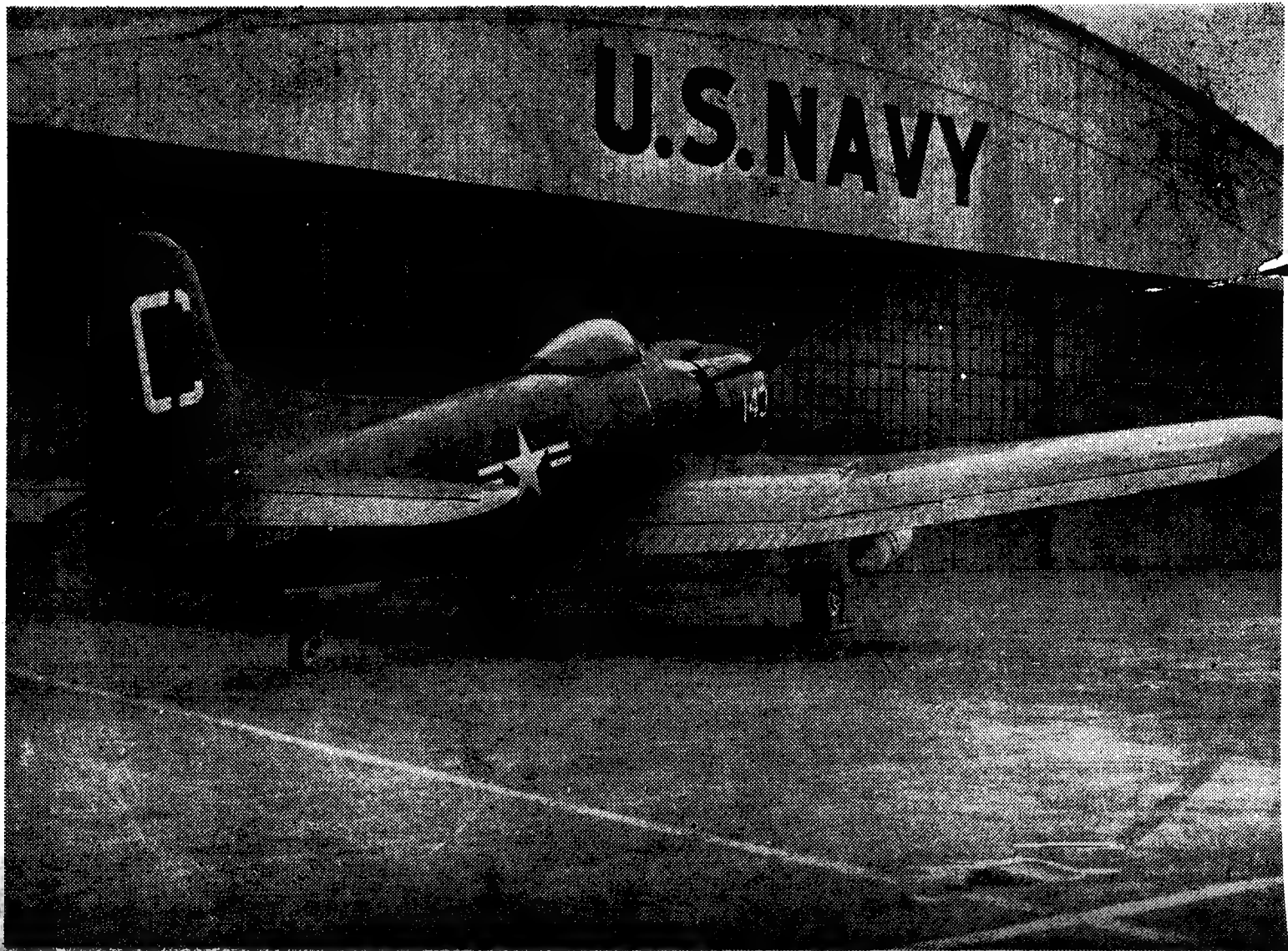
Like all fairs except those that are strictly industrial, the one to be staged here is following the time-honored custom of emphasizing agricultural exhibits. With so many classifications, the cash prizes for winning entries aren't large, but the distinction of producing the best of this or that is a source of keen satisfaction.

The Mirror has always felt that New Bern in the past has missed the boat badly in showing its rural neighbors that they really are appreciated. Actually, the average New Bernian does feel genuine friendship for the farm families around us, but he has done a poor job of proving it.

For example, when our town plays host to the Coastal Carolina Junior Dairy Show only a handful of local citizens put in an appearance. The event provides an excellent opportunity for representatives of our various business firms to be conspicuously present and spread good will.

We've harped on this sort of thing before, and we intend to keep on harping until the kids who came here from all adjoining counties get the welcome they deserve. Until they do, we'll be ashamed and so should every other New Bernian.

More power to the Craven county Jaycee Fair and Exposition.



**GOT DOWN SAFELY**—Pictured here is the AMI Martin Mauler that New Bern's Johnny Pritchett (see story below) was flying 10 years ago, when he was overcome by carbon monoxide fumes. What happened after that made world headlines, and paved the way for further heroism later.

## Johnny Will Never Forget What Happened in 1951

When Johnny Pritchett made the varsity in baseball, basketball and football at New Bern High school over a quarter of a century ago, he had neither speed nor size to back him up. Skinnier than a starved cat, he relied on sheer determination to hold his own against bigger and stronger opponents.

Neither Johnny nor those who marveled at his spunk knew that a day would come when his characteristic courage would save his life under circumstances so dramatic and terrifying that newspapers around the globe would detail the story on their front pages.

Pritchett, now 44 and a Commander in the Naval Reserve, lives in Columbus, Ohio, where he is a proud husband and father, and has his own accounting firm. But we doubt that accounting will be on his mind on November 11, the tenth anniversary of his most harrowing experience.

Johnny's dangerous World War II flying was behind him that peaceful Sunday morning, as he took part with other reserve pilots of the VA-691 Squadron on a routine navigation mission from Columbus to Charleston, Cincinnati and back to Columbus.

There were seven planes in the flight, but the New Bernian in his single-place torpedo plane — a big AMI Martin Mauler — was flying in a formation with two other ships piloted by Lt. W. C. Shroyer of Strasburg, Ohio, and Lt. R. R. Merritt of Indianapolis, Ind.

"During engine warm-up I put on my oxygen mask," Johnny reported later, "tested for emergency oxygen, tested for 100 per cent oxygen, and normal operation. I did not take off

my oxygen mask from this time on, until the start of my return trip from Charleston."

Continuing, he said, "I thought that I was on 100 per cent oxygen while on the ground, although from

facts later developed it appears that the valve was set for normal. The flight took off and we climbed to approximately 4,000 feet before leveling off, and headed toward Charleston, W. Va.



IN HOSPITAL AFTER ORDEAL

"Approximately 20 or 30 minutes flying time from Columbus, I began to feel rather queer. By this I mean I didn't feel the way I normally do. This feeling is rather hard to explain, as I had no feeling of being sick but rather a feeling of drowsiness or being very tired.

"Since I was on oxygen I did not think very much about this feeling until about five minutes later my hand fell from throttle, and it was very hard for me to return my hand to the throttle. This I believe is when I realized something was wrong.

"I immediately thought of carbon monoxide and checked my oxygen valve. I wasn't sure if I had it on normal or 100 per cent oxygen, as I could not see the valve. I unhooked my shoulder straps and bent forward to where I could see the markings on the valve. I cannot remember if the valve was on 100 per cent or normal oxygen, but I do know that at this time I turned to 100 per cent oxygen.

"I remember looking in the mirror on the canopy quite frequently from this point on. I don't know the reason for doing this other than that I thought I might get an indication as to what was wrong with me by the coloring of my face. Another indication that I had at this time was that I couldn't concentrate on my flying.

"I would be holding my position in flight and suddenly realize I had been looking at the other planes without seeing them. I called my flight leader, and told him that I was sick or felt funny. I don't remember exactly what I did say. I heard over the radio that I should turn around and head toward Co-  
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