

## DUFF AND PLANES

Denverite is jet-age junkman

J. W. "Bill" Duff has bought and sold one Cessna 172 three times so far, and the jet age junk man figures he hasn't seen the last of it yet on his sprawling lot near the city airport. Duff operates what he believes to be the largest private used aircraft parts business in the world, with 200 small craft that are more or less complete and bits and scraps of thousands more. They include everything from jets to antiques and the turnover amounts to better than \$500,000 a year.

"We can't lose. Most of these airplanes are going to crack up sooner or later," he says. "I'm scared to death of light planes and won't ride in them, myself. I owned a little Cessna once, but only rode in it four times," said Duff who has logged a total 150 hours of flying time as a pilot. The problem, he asserts, is not with the planes themselves but their pilots. "We pick up a lot of wrecks in the Rockies because people don't know the mountains and terrain."

Duff and his two employes travel up to 55,000 miles a year by truck hauling wrecked planes from across the 48 states, and sometimes Alaska, Canada and Mexico as well. Re-sales of the parts are made all over the world. "Some people chase women and some people drink," said the 48-year-old bachelor. "But I've got a phobia for buying airplanes. "I'll probably never get married. It would be pretty hard to get a broadminded wife since I buy airplanes like a wife buys groceries.

"I'll buy anything -- we once took 800 old seats from the airplanes and recently I picked up 37 sets of new floats from military surplus." The floats, he added, have sold like wildfire to people in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska. Duff says his interest in airplanes started before he went to work for a flying school at the age of 13 and continued in jobs as a fueler with commercial airlines. At 25, he went to work for an auto wrecker who also bought plane parts and eventually bought him out. His biggest single purchases so far have been a pair of twin-engine commercial Otters that cost \$40,000 apiece and re-sold for \$65,000 each.

Older piston engines are now a hot item because the military isn't selling any, he added. But it isn't all gravy on his 14-acre lot. "Nobody knows what a wrecked aircraft is worth. You can't tell. I got burned with a glider I bought sight-unseen for \$2,500 and later had to give away for \$25 because it was fiberglass and couldn't be fixed. "The market fluctuates, but that's part of it. I wouldn't sell out for anything. If I did, I'd just go out and buy more trash somewhere else."

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