



Wearing a "hood" to cut out all outside visibility, Roger Dennis learns to fly by instrument control.



A closer inspection of the sign shows that it was issued by the United States of America War Office, effective January 1920.

Approximately 85 flyers compose the club. Msgr. Roche is the only clergyman in its membership. He is a licensed flight instructor and instrument flight instructor and is licensed also to fly single and multi-engine planes. His interest goes back to boyhood. "I'm like every other red-blooded American who's interested in flying," the priest said.

Most of his flying has been pretty routine, but he told of a flight with a parent and child who were heading for a school for the retarded in Ohio. They flew into a storm, and an inch and a half of ice coated the plane. "Luckily, it didn't reach a danger level," Msgr. Roche said.

Up in the control tower, operator Bill Read explained how he keeps the planes from running into each other. By 2:30 p.m. that day, he successfully had negotiated the arrival and/or departure of 86 air craft. The small airport averages 100 planes per day. A stack up is rare, although Msgr. Roche had to wait 20 minutes to land last week.

A fellow flyer, Asa Culver, recalled that he "was thought to be a bit more crazy back then" — 30 years ago, when his hobby was less common. I appreciated the "crazy" element as we skimmed over rooftops and barely avoided telephone wires to visit Culver and two students who are taking flying lessons from the monsignor.

Culver, past president of the International Flying Farmers, and Terry and Bill Kenney have their own planes and use a grassy air strip in the fields. It is only 2,400 feet long as compared to the 4,000 feet of an ordinary airport runway. From the air, it looks like a thin green ribbon. Should one come down off course, the options are a corn field on one side, a wheat field on the other.

But when you fly Msgr. Roche, all your fears are groundless.