

## WHAT DID SHELLY

## *Say to the Duke?*

Elsie Lee

Shelly Charles, Atlanta flyer, Captain of one of the huge silver planes of the Eastern Air Lines and winner of enough trophies to completely hide his huge trophy table, was requested by the Duke of Windsor to give a "command performance" while at the Miami Air Meet that was held from the tenth to the twelfth of January.

Shelly had taken his sailplane down to the air meet to do some exhibition flying. He has been soaring for about two and one half years and has already won several prizes and many honors in this field. He is the American Open Soaring Champion and Vice-President of The Soaring Society of America.

"I had been requested by the Miami Air Maneuvers Association to come down and put on a soaring and acrobatic exhibition for three days. Being quite anxious to explore the possibilities of thermal soaring at Miami, I accepted their invitation. On the first day the flying was restricted to an extent due to high winds and extreme cold, so I was not required to fly. By Saturday, the wind had abated considerably and it was much warmer. I was still afraid that weather conditions were far from favorable to good soaring, however. The Friday papers had carried the next day's weather forecast and also the head-lined news that the Duke of Windsor was expected to arrive Saturday for the maneuvers, weather permitting, but somehow, the time of his arrival didn't register with me.

"Saturday and time for my exhibition flight—about one o'clock—came and as per schedule, I was towed by a plane to about 3,500 feet, expecting to stunt down to a low level and land. But, to my delight, on my way down I encountered so many good thermals that I was reluctant to come down. This was going to bear out my conviction that flat country was as ideal as hilly for soaring and that Miami, although its topography is contrary to that usually accepted as having good soaring qualities, was good soaring country."

Shelly stayed up about fifteen minutes over his scheduled time, absorbed in his discovery, and his attention was finally attracted to the field below when they sent up an aerial bomb. He came on down and landed with no idea in his mind as to the signal's special significance. Then one of the men came running up out of breath and pointed to the field in front of the grandstand where a huge red and silver amphibian had just taxied to a stop.

"That's the Duke of Windsor! You've kept him circling the field for about ten minutes waiting for you to come down."

"You can imagine how I felt," Shelly writes, "I had not even been conscious of there being another ship in the air!"

He said that he had expected the crowd to greet Windsor with loud cheers instead of with the dead silence that



Lane Bros.

He performed for the Duke of Windsor

fell as he stepped out of his plane. But everybody was too intent with looking to utter a sound. Then the band struck up "God Save the King" and they broke into cheers.

He left the Minimoa and hurried to his box, where his wife sat, to get his movie camera. As he came back, Mr. Fromhagen, the Contest Chairman, started towards him at a run.

"I have great news for you, Charles," he said as soon as he got close, "You've just been requested by the Duke of Windsor to put on another exhibition! He also wants to talk to you—before you go up!"

"Did you get a kick out of that?" he was asked.

"Get a kick out of it! Of course, I did! But it sounds awfully silly if I tell you that, on the way up to the tower where he and his party were, all I could think of was in what manner I should address him. My embarrassment was needless, however, for when I was introduced he stuck out his hand and said 'Have a seat.' Lucky, for by that time, with the way things were, I really needed one! He is younger-looking than his pictures show him—very quiet-mannered and friendly. And he is keen on soaring. He said, 'I enjoyed your flying. I was watching you closely while we circled the airport.' That was when I apologized for keeping them up in the air and told him that I had no idea it was time for his plane to arrive.

"'Oh that was all right,' he said, 'I enjoyed it and would like you to give another flight.'"

"What did he talk to you about?" Shelly has been asked.

"Well, he wanted to know what I did and where I lived. He remembers Atlanta as Bobby Jones' home. And he remarked that he had, a few days ago, played in a foursome with Charlie Yates at the opening of the New

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