DEPALMA---SPEED KING DELUXE!

Says Racing Isn't Dangerous Or He Wouldn't Do It

"Isn't racing awful dangerous?"

Ralph De Palma must answer this question at least fifty times every day that he works his fast new "905" or "299" in speed or on the racing track. And every time his answer is the same.

"If I thought it was, I wouldn't do it!"

"But don't racing drivers get hurt and killed?" suggests the questioner—people seem to have a child-like interest in discussing with the speed king all the different things that might happen to him.

"Yes, they do—but only when accidents occur," is De Palma's reply.

By which he means that every mishap in his own speed career has been definitely traceable to an accident—a tire "blew," a bolt flew through the raditor, something like that. But something is just as likely to happen while father is climbing up the step-ladder with a length of stove pipe, De Palma points out, and for that reason he maintains that step-ladders are dangerous, and father is apt to have an accident no less than the automobile racing driver. In fact, the probabilities are very much against heads of families climbing step-ladders, as compared with speed kings meeting disaster, because the latter are few in number, and people who climb step-ladders are a multitude.

As an illustration that racing drivers can be careful, De Palma cites the 100 per cent record of his friend, Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker, the former auto racing star, who went to France in Uncle Sam's aviation service last April, and in seven months of air fighting brought down 26 German planes. This was a better record than any made by American flyers in the famous Lafayette Squadron, which had over three year's experience. Yet Rickenbacker never crashed a single airplane, or even broke a wing or a tail. He brought down 18 Germans with one Spad machine, and ran another for 120 hours, though the average life of that type of plane was only 9 hours in fighting service.

De Palma has been a serious student of speed for 16 years, and is now spoken of as a veteran, though he is only 36 years old. Still going strong, and faster than ever. His first speed work was as a bicycle racer, a fine that he took up because, athletic in his tastes, he thought it would be good body culture. Then he graduated into motor cycle racing, and from that to automobiles. His first experience in the latter line was in 1908, when he did a mile in 51 seconds. At Daytona, Florida, the other day, he did a mile in less than half the time, 24.02 seconds, or practically 2½ miles a minute.

These records are not exactly comparable officially, because the speed of 1908 was made on a dirt track, with a racing car, within the 300 cubic inch displacement limits set for racing, whereas the 1919 record was made in a 905 cubic inch Packard equipped with an aviation engine, built for speed, pure and simple, and not admissable for competitive track racing. But as records of how fast a human being can get over a mile of beach, and also as measures of the development of a speed king, they are certainly interesting.

No limit has yet been reached in auto speed, says De Palma. Owing to trouble with the official electric timing device in Florida the top speed of his big car was not put on record. So he hurried out to Santa Monica Beach in California, determined to bring out the utmost speed that can ge secured from his latest creation.

De Palma broke a record of nearly 8 years standing in Florida—that of the late Bob Burman, who in 1911, drove a big Blitzen Benz car of German make at a pace of nearly 142 miles an hour. Burman's car had difficulty in keeping on the ground, owing to the tendency to plane, due to the terrific speed. But through scientific balancing and also the more even application of power from 12 cylinders, De Palma's car shows perfect traction, leaving uniform wheel marks on the sand. This gives a basis for pushing on further wheel marks on the sand. This through higher power and still greater refinements in construction. Two and a half miles a minute is going some, yet De Palma considers it merely interesting. For he is looking to the future, a period of not more than a year hence, and perhaps only a matter of months, when the foreign automobile builders will have returned to peace production and developed new speed marvels with which to again invade the United States. As an American racing driver, working with an American car, built on lines developed by our own war experience, De Palma is glad to be leading the procession today. He wants to see American cars stay in the lead, and is working toward that end.

There is a reason.

The car which De Palma drives today represents the contribution of American private enterprise to aviation, as contrasted with the products of European makers stimulated by government subsides for war. The big 905 aviation motor in De Palma's Packard was designed by American engineers and built in an American factory during the same early 1915 period when European manufacturers were developing aviation engines to meet the desperate need of the Allies on the Western Front. It was complete and ready for action before America declared war on Germany.

So De Palma is demonstrating more speed with his remarkable new car. He is demonstrating American design, American manufacturing methods and an American industrial ideal, as contrasted with those of Europe. And he wants to see America keep the lead!

TRUCKS PLAYED BIG PART IN ARMY

Delivered Men and Supplies to Pershing; Two Prime Functions

Trucks saved the day at the Marne, they saved the railroads in America and they literally carried the armies of freedom to victory overseas.

In America's first days of the war the truck manufacturers were summoned and told the needs of Uncle Sam. They responded with a willingness and an output that soon choked the highways between points of embarkation and such factory cities as Detroit, Lansing and other western points.

Before the full possibilities of the motor-driven freight car had been realized, the high command of the American army anticipated its supreme usefulness by creating the motor transport corps, the newest and a thoroughly independent branch of the service.

Army engineers and officials of the War Department had long been concerned with the question of transportation by motor truck. The limited but indispensable service rendered along the border and over the barren sands of Mexico was the first conclusive evidence of the passing of the historic army mule. The truck trains as employed during the Mexican expedition represented motor transportation in its primitive form. There were no stringent road regulations, no traffic signals, no inspection rules or schedules for time, speed and distance between trucks, such as has been perfected in the new-born motor transport corps. But the great American truck made good on the first trial; it delivered men to Pershing and it delivered supplies to Pershing's men, the two prime functions of motor transportation.

The formation of the motor corps as an independent branch came in what might be called the closing phase of hostilities. It had not yet reached the height of its attainments, nor had it time to embrace the many opportunities of truck delivery. The first great output of Government vehicles was made up for the most part of trucks in the heavier class. These powerful carriers, in fleets of fifty or 100, did the work of twice as many mule-driven loads in half the time. At Camp Johnston, Fla., the largest motor transport camp in America, these giant trucks accomplished wonders; over every highway in Amercia they lifted burdens from the railroads, while the destruction they carried to the Hun in France is written in the page of recent history.

But, just as in the commercial world, there are some places and certain situations where the nimbler light and medium weight truck is better suited to the work. The employment of gigantic naval guns in the advanced fighting zone, where mobility, quick handling and rapid change of position is the all-important consideration, presents the same objections as the use of heavy trucks in parallel circumstances.

Army men and chiefs of the motor transport corps were quite aware of this fundamental, and a few more months of war would have seen a great demonstration of the value of the lighter trucks. Officers in charge at Camp Johnson and abroad were eager for a great fleet of lighter cars to supplement the heavy trucks and go where the larger machine could not.

Data and figures of service were gathered from every possible source, but there was no single performance that so impressed officials as the sensational journey made from San Francisco to New York by a Maxwell truck. Loaded to the guards with war supplies shipped from Australia, en route to France, this powerful light vehicle startled the transportation world by delivering its cargo in 17 days and 8 hours.

Averaging 197 miles per day and encountering all the obstacles of a continuous 3400-mile trip, this sturdy lightweight truck surpassed all existing records of motor transportation, if, indeed, it did not outdo the best effort of the average freight train. Democracy and the motor truck are the two great and permanent outcomes of the world war. No commercial organization with returned soldiers on its payroll will retain other than motor-driven vehicles, for no soldier that has ever seen motor truck performance will be content until such economy and efficiency is a part of his employer's organization.

HARSH CRITICISM

Alfred Noyes was complaining in New York about a harsh critic.

"This critic's work," he said, "reminds me in its unsparing harshness of a dialogue between two villagers.

"'There goes Bill Smith,' said the first villager. 'Bill ain't the man he used to be.'

"'No,' said the second villager, 'and he never was.'"—Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph.