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Pioneer overseas airman recognized

Hampton Dunn

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Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



PIONEER OVERSEAS AIRMAN RECOGNIZED

By HAMPTON DUNN

KEY WEST --- Today, it's nothing to fly over water for long distances; pilots go around the world, astronauts zoom to the moon. But in the year 1913 the challenge of an oversea flight attracted daredevils of the day.

The Cuban government had offered \$5,000 to the first aviator to make the 90-mile jump between the island of Cuba and the mainland of the United States. Up till then there had been only one flight over the water in all aviation history. This was a 12-mile flight somewhere in Europe.

Key West, the southernmost city of the U.S., was all excited that day of May 19, 1913, when not one, but three, pilots decided to try their luck.

Handsome, 26-year-old Augustin Pardla Orduna stepped into a seaplane biplane near the present Naval Annex on Caroline Street, when it was the to-be terminus of the Florida East Coast Railway. There was a strong family connection between Parla and Cuba. Although he was born in Key West on Oct. 11, 1887, his parents were Cuban exiles who had fled their native land during the struggle for their country's independence.

Parla succeeded in his historic journey, landing at El Mariel, Cuba. He is honored with a bust memorial erected at the entrance to the Key West International Airport (photo).

Meanwhile, an American flier, John A. Douglas McCurdy, who earlier had gone down to the sea and was rescued by Navy Vessels in the cross-water attempt, and Domingo Rosillo, a Cuban, also flew safely to Havana---but Parla had the honor of being first.



THE COUNTY OF WINDHOLM, STATE OF FLORIDA,
RESOLVES THIS TRIBUTE TO
AUSTIN WILSON SPURR
SON OF GUY WILSON OCTOBER 11, 1892
OF ST. PAUL FLORIDA EARLY LEARNED THE AIRCRAFT
FOR THIS COUNTRY'S DEFENSE
AND WAS THE FIRST MAN TO FLY THE AIRCRAFT
OVER THE SEA FROM GUY WILSON, FLORIDA
TO ST. PAUL, FLORIDA, ON MAY 15, 1911
FROM TO HIS MOTHER
JULY 4, 1911
ERNEST WILSON, CHAIRMAN OF
THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
WINDHOLM, FLORIDA, MAY 1911