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Wright Brothers Collection - Original Bid of Wright Brothers for Military Airplane, 1911, Box 1

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WAR DEPARTMENT.
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF SIGNAL OFFICER.
WASHINGTON
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THE WRIGHT AEROPLANE.

December 23, 1907, the Chief Signal Officer of the Army issued an advertisement inviting sealed proposals for a heavier-than-air flying machine which would fulfill certain general requirements set forth in Signal Corps specification No. 486.

February 1, 1908, proposals were opened and awards made on February 10, 1908, to three different bidders, including the Wright brothers. Two bidders failed to fulfill their agreement and their contracts were canceled.

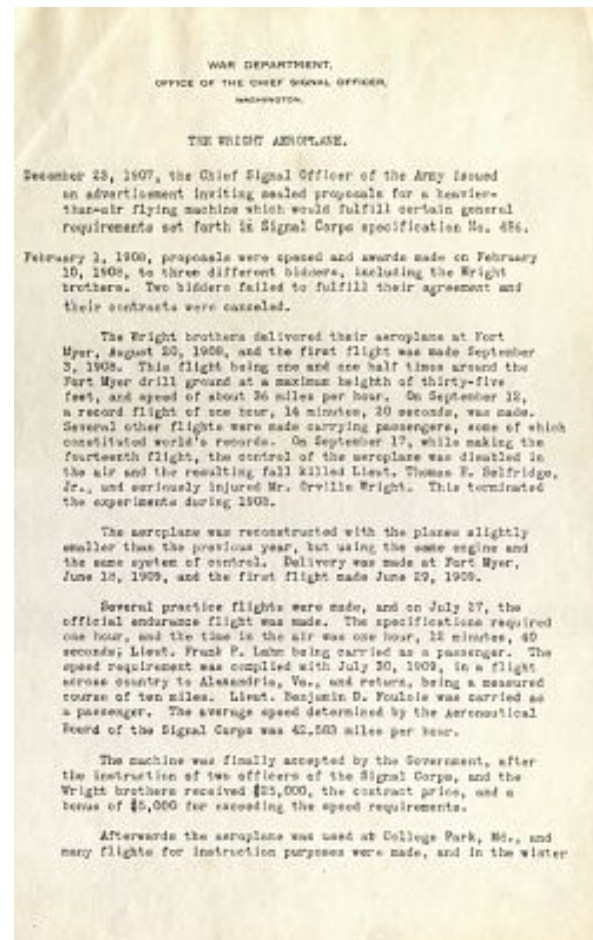
The Wright brothers delivered their aeroplane at Fort Myer, August 20, 1908, and the first flight was made September 3, 1908. This flight being one and one half times around the Fort Myer drill ground at a maximum height of thirty-five feet, and speed of about 36 miles per hour. On September 12, a record flight of one hour, 14 minutes, 20 seconds, was made. Several other flights were made carrying passengers, some of which constituted world's records. On September 17, while making the fourteenth flight, the control of the aeroplane was disabled in the air and the resulting fall killed Lieut. Thomas E. Selfridge, Jr., and seriously injured Mr. Orville Wright. This terminated the experiments during 1908.

The aeroplane was reconstructed with the plans slightly smaller than the previous year, but using the same engine and the same system of control. Delivery was made at Fort Myer, June 18, 1909, and the first flight made June 29, 1909.

Several practice flights were made, and on July 27, the official endurance flight was made. The specifications required one hour, and the time in the air was one hour, 12 minutes, 40 seconds; Lieut. Frank P. Lahm being carried as a passenger. The speed requirement was complied with July 30, 1909, in a flight across country to Alexandria, Va., and return, being a measured course of ten miles. Lieut. Benjamin D. Foulois was carried as a passenger. The average speed determined by the Aeronautical Board of the Signal Corps was 42.583 miles per hour.

The machine was finally accepted by the Government, after the instruction of two officers of the Signal Corps, and the Wright brothers received \$25,000, the contract price, and a bonus of \$5,000 for exceeding the speed requirements.

Afterwards the aeroplane was used at College Park, Md., and many flights for instruction purposes were made, and in the winter



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