



**Smithsonian Institution**

*Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives*

## **Thomas DeWitt Milling Collection - Clippings**

Extracted on Apr-17-2024 11:33:18

**The Smithsonian Institution thanks all digital volunteers that transcribed and reviewed this material. Your work enriches Smithsonian collections, making them available to anyone with an interest in using them.**

The Smithsonian Institution (the "Smithsonian") provides the content on this website ([transcription.si.edu](https://transcription.si.edu)), other Smithsonian websites, and third-party sites on which it maintains a presence ("SI Websites") in support of its mission for the "increase and diffusion of knowledge." The Smithsonian invites visitors to use its online content for personal, educational and other non-commercial purposes. By using this website, you accept and agree to abide by the [following terms](#).

- If sharing the material in personal and educational contexts, please cite the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives as source of the content and the project title as provided at the top of the document. Include the accession number or collection name; when possible, link to the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives website.
- If you wish to use this material in a for-profit publication, exhibition, or online project, please contact Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives or [transcribe@si.edu](mailto:transcribe@si.edu)

For more information on this project and related material, contact the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives. [See this project](#) and other collections in the Smithsonian Transcription Center.

MARCH 14, 1915

This Tribute from an Early Bird

In Memoriam

[[image]]

Lieutenant Thomas E. Selfridge

Died Following Accident to Wright Military Aeroplane

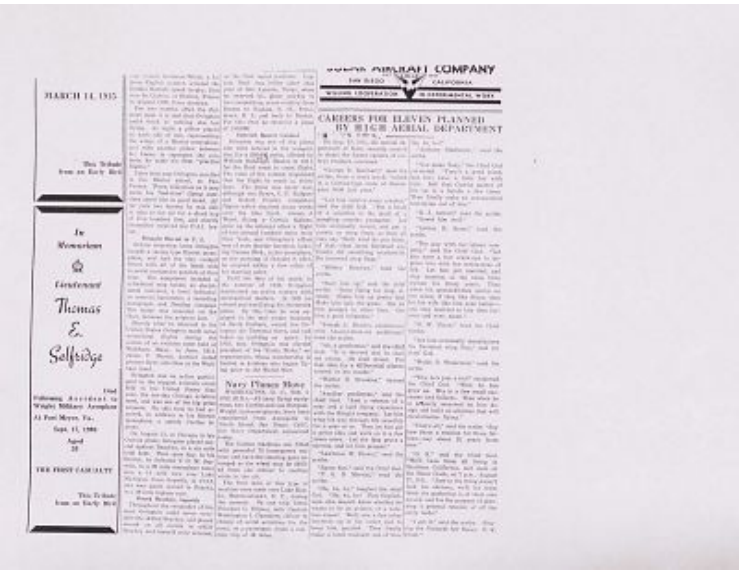
At Fort Meyer, Va.,

Sept. 17, 1908

Aged 26

THE FIRST CASUALTY

This Tribute from an Early Bird



that Claude Grahame-White, a famous English aviator, wrested the Gordon Bennett speed trophy, first won by Curtiss, at Rheims, France in August 1909, from America.

For two months after the Belmont meet it is said that Ovington could think of nothing else but flying. At night a pillow placed on each side of him, representing the wings of a Bleriot monoplane, and with another pillow between his knees, to represent the controls, he made his first "practice flights."

Later that year Ovington enrolled in the Bleriot school, at Pau, France. There, ridiculous as it may seem, his "bed-time" flying exercises stood him in good stead. After only two lessons he was able to take to the air for a short hop of five hundred feet, and shortly thereafter received his F.A.I. brevet

Brought Bleriot to U.S.

Before returning home Ovington bought a racing type Bleriot monoplane, and had the tiny cockpit fitted with all of the latest aids to aerial navigation possible at that time. The equipment included a cylindrical map holder, an electric speed indicator, a level indicator, an aneroid barometer, a recording barograph and floating compass. The latter was mounted on the floor, between the aviators feet. Shortly after he returned to the United States Ovington made some sensational flights during the course of an aviation meet held at Waltham, Mass., in June, 1911. James V. Martin, another noted pioneer flyer, also flew at the Waltham meet.

Ovington was an active participant in the biggest aviation event held in the United States that year, the ten-day Chicago aviation meet, and was

one of the big prize winners. By this time he had acquired, in addition to his Bleriot monoplane, a speedy Curtiss biplane.

On August 12, at Chicago, in his Curtiss plane, Ovington placed second against Beachey, in a six mile trial heat. That same day, in his Bleriot, he defeated T.O.M. Sopwith, in a 14 mile race over Lake Michigan, from Sopwith, in 17:13, and was again second to Beachy, in a 20 mile biplane race.

Raced Beachey, Sopwith

Throughout the remainder of the meet Ovington could never overtake the skilled Beachey, and placed second on all events in which Beachey and himself were entered; [[?]] honored as the first aerial postman. Captain Beck was killed later that year at San Antonio, Texas, when he swerved his plane quickly to two competitors, cross-country from Boston to Nashua, N.H., Providence, R.I., and back to Boston. For this feat he received a prize of \$10,000.

Entered Hearst Contest

Ovington was one of the pilots who were entered in the competition for a \$50,000 prize, offered by William Randolph Hearst in 1911, for the first coast to coast flight. The rules of the contest stipulated that the flight be made in thirty days. The purse was never won, although two flyers, C.P. Rodgers and Robert Fowler completed flights which required many weeks over the time limit. James J. Ward, flying a Curtiss biplane, gave up the attempt after a flight of but several hundred miles from New York, and Ovington's effort was of even shorter duration. Leaving Nassau Blvd., in his monoplane, on the morning of October 8, 1911, he crashed within a few miles of his starting point.

Until the time of his death, in the summer of 1936, Ovington maintained a active contact with aeronautical matters. In 1931 he owned and was flying his thirteenth plane. By this time he was engaged in the real estate business at Santa Barbara, owned the Ovington Air Terminal there, and had taken up yachting as sport. In 1931, also, Ovington was elected president of the "early Birds," an organization, whose membership is limited to aviators who began flying prior to the World War.

Navy Planes Move

WASHINGTON, D.C., Feb. 1 1912 (E.B) - All navy flying equipment, two Curtiss and one Burgess-Wright hydroaeroplanes, have been transferred from Annapolis to North Island, San Diego, Calif., the Navy Department announced today.

The Curtiss machines are fitted with powerful 75 horsepower motors, and have the steering gear arranged so the wheel may be shifted from one aviator to another while in the air.

The first tests of this type of machine were made over Lake Keuka, Hammondsport, N.Y., during the summer. On one trip Lieut. Theodore G. Ellyson, with Captain Washington I. Chambers, officer in charge of aerial activities for the navy, as a passenger, made a non-stop trip of 40 miles.

SOLAR AIRCRAFT COMPANY  
EST. SOLAR 1927  
SAN DIEGO  CALIFORNIA  
WILLING COOPERATION IN EXPERIMENTAL WORK

#### CAREERS FOR ELEVEN PLANNED BY HIGH AERIAL DEPARTMENT

On Aug. 27, 1911, the special department of Gods, recently created to direct the future careers of embryo birdmen convened.

"George E. Barnhart," read the scribe, from a short scroll, "soloed in a Curtiss-type crate at Dominguez field last year."

"Let him survive many crashes," said the chief God. "Put a brain of a scientist in the skull of a gangling country youngster. Let him eventually invent, and get a patent on wing flaps, so that all may say 'Well, what do you think of that - that dumb Barnhart guy finally did something worthwhile. He invented wing flaps.'"

"Hillary Beachey," read the scribe.

"Bust him up," said the chief scribe. "Been flying too long, already. Shake him up pretty bad. Make him quit the game. But let him prosper in other lines. Get him a good helpmate."

"Joseph A. Blondin, exballoonist with heavier-than-air ambitions," read the scribe.

"Ah, a gentleman," said the chief God. "It is decreed that he shall not aviate. He shall invent. Put that idea for a differential aileron control in his noodle."

"Walter R. Brookins," intoned the scribe.

"Another gentleman," said the chief God. "And a veteran of a year and a half flying experience with the Wright company. Let him wing his way through life smoothly for a year or so. Then let him get a great idea and work on it a few years more. Let the idea prove a success, and let him prosper."

"Lawrence W. Brown," read the scribe.

"Spare him," said the Chief God.

"P. G. . Morriss," read the scribe.

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed the chief God. "Ha, ha, ho! That Englishman who doesn't know whether he wants to be an aviator, or a wireless expert. Well, mix a few other interests up in his career just to keep him puzzled. Then finally make a hotel manager out of him. Ho, ho, ho!"

"Anthony Stadleman," read the scribe.

"You mean Tony," the Chief God corrected. "Tony's a good scout, but let's have a little fun with him. Roll that Curtiss pusher of his up in a bundle a few times. Then finally make an aeronautical technician out of him."

"R.J. Armor," read the scribe.  
"Guard him well."

"Arthur B. Stone," read the scribe.

"The guy with the Queen company," said the Chief God. "Let him have a few crack-ups to impress him with the seriousness of life. Let him get married, and stay married, to the same little woman for thirty years. Then when his grandchildren arrive on the scene, if they like Stone, then let his wife like him even better—and stay married to him then forever and ever, amen."

"O. W. Timm," read the Chief Scribe.

"Let him eventually manufacture the Barnhart wing flap," said the chief God.

"Waldo D. Waterman," read the scribe.

"Why he's just a kid!" exclaimed the Chief God. "Well, let him grow up. Mix in a few small successes and failures. Then when he is properly seasoned let him design and build an airplane that will revolutionize flying."

"That's all," said the scribe. "Say how about a reunion for those fellows—say about 25 years from now."

"O.K." said the Chief God. "We'll have them all living in Southern California, and meet at the Hotel Clark, at 7 p.m., August 27, 1911. "Just so the thing doesn't look too obvious, we'll let them think the gathering is of their own accord, and for the purpose of planning a general reunion of all the early birds."

"I get it," said the scribe. "During the National Air Races. O.K. Chief."

Thomas DeWitt Milling Collection - Clippings  
Transcribed and Reviewed by Digital Volunteers  
Extracted Apr-17-2024 11:33:18



## Smithsonian Institution

*Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives*

The mission of the Smithsonian is the increase and diffusion of knowledge - shaping the future by preserving our heritage, discovering new knowledge, and sharing our resources with the world. Founded in 1846, the Smithsonian is the world's largest museum and research complex, consisting of 19 museums and galleries, the National Zoological Park, and nine research facilities. Become an active part of our mission through the Transcription Center. Together, we are discovering secrets hidden deep inside our collections that illuminate our history and our world.

Join us!

The Transcription Center: <https://transcription.si.edu>

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SmithsonianTranscriptionCenter>

On Twitter: [@TranscribeSI](https://twitter.com/TranscribeSI)

Connect with the Smithsonian

Smithsonian Institution: [www.si.edu](http://www.si.edu)

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Smithsonian>

On Twitter: [@smithsonian](https://twitter.com/smithsonian)