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Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Addems, Walter J.

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WALTER J. ADDEMS

Walter J. Addems was born at Loda, Illinois, January 10, 1899, the son of Harry F. Addems and Emilie Koehler Addems. In 1909 the family moved to Manteno, Illinois, when his father became a partner in, and operator of, a grain business.

Addems had been interested in aeronautics and this interest was stimulated when he saw the cross-country flight by Walter Brookins, from Chicago to Springfield, Illinois, in a Wright biplane on September 29, 1910. This interest led from model airplanes to the building and flying of a glider. This was a large aircraft, having an upper wing span of 30 feet. The design resembled a Curtiss pusher and was very light, following quite closely that used in Chanute-type gliders. The landing gear was much like the standard Curtiss-type. The machine was towed by a motor car and a number of gliding flights were made from June through August of 1916.

During the winter of 1916-17 Addems built a monoplane glider. To some degree, it resembled a Bleriot but had much less camber in the wings and the landing gear was more conventional. Addems flew this machine as a towed glider during the spring of 1917, but for only a short time as he had obtained summer employment to earn money for college. His ambition was to take a course in mechanical engineering at the University of Illinois and to go to Massachusetts Institute of Technology for a aeronautical course. He entered the university in the fall of 1917. At that time many former University of Illinois students, who had gone to France to drive ambulances prior to our entering the war, were returning, and many were entering the Aviation Section of Signal Corps. This appealed to Addems so very much that he left school at the Christmas vacation period with the intention of also following this course.

His decision became known to Mr. George Lawrence of Chicago who had followed his earlier glider work. Mr. Lawrence advised Addems that he was finish-

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