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## **Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Atwater, William B.**

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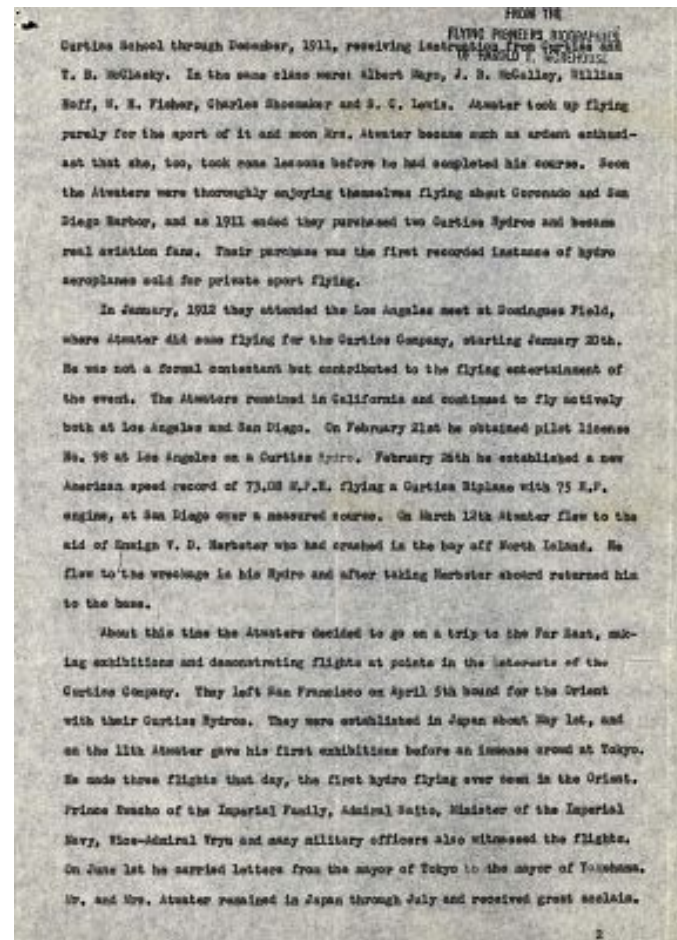
FROM THE FLYING PIONEERS BIOGRAPHIES OF HAROLD E. MOREHOUSE

Curtiss School through December, 1911, receiving instruction from Curtiss and T. B. McClasky. In the same class were: Albert Mayo, J. B. McCalley, William Hoff, W. H. Fisher, Charles Shoemaker and S. C. Lewis. Atwater took up flying purely for the sport of it and soon Mrs. Atwater became such an ardent enthusiast that she, too, took some lessons before he had completed his course. Soon the Atwaters were thoroughly enjoying themselves flying about Coronado and San Diego Harbor, and as 1911 ended they purchased two Curtiss Hydros and became real aviation fans. Their purchase was the first recorded instance of hydro aeroplanes sold for private sport flying.

In January, 1912 they attended the Los Angeles meet at Dominguez Field, where Atwater did some flying for the Curtiss Company, starting January 20th. He was not a formal contestant but contributed to the flying entertainment of the event. The Atwaters remained in California and continued to fly actively both at Los Angeles and San Diego. On February 21st he obtained pilot license No. 98 at Los Angeles on a Curtiss Hydro. February 26th he established a new American speed record of 73.08 M.P.H. flying a Curtiss Biplane with 75 H.P. engine, at San Diego over a measured course. On March 12th Atwater flew to the aid of Ensign V. D. Herbster who had crashed in the bay off North Island. He flew to the wreckage in his Hydro and after taking Herbster aboard returned him to the base.

About this time the Atwaters decided to go on a trip to the Far East, making exhibitions and demonstrating flights at points in the interests of the Curtiss Company. They left San Francisco on April 5th bound for the Orient with their Curtiss Hydros. They were established in Japan about May 1st, and on the 11th Atwater gave his first exhibitions before an immense crowd at Tokyo. He made three flights that day, the first hydro flying ever seen in the Orient. Prince Kwacho of the Imperial Family, Admiral Saito, Minister of the Imperial Navy, Vice-Admiral Vryu and many military officers also witnessed the flights. On June 1st he carried letters from the mayor of Tokyo to the mayor of Yokohama. Mr. and Mrs. Atwater remained in Japan through July and received great acclaim.

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