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## **Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Benoist, Thomas W.**

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for the 1914 summer season, each with a Benoist flying boat. Jay D. Smith, one of the graduate students of the St. Petersburg school, then took over the flying for Benoist, however Rodger Jannus continued to do occasional test flying for the company. Benoist gave up flying personally piloted exhibition flying that year. The new 4-place flying boat was completed and flown in June, then work was started on a large 7-passenger twin-engine boat of 75-foot span, using two 100 h.p. Roberts engines. This was successfully test flown later in the year.

Benoist moved his operations to Chicago in the early spring of 1915, but apparently kept his St. Louis facility intact. That spring he continued development work on the large twin-engine boat and had orders for additional standard flying boats. He also built a small single-seat tractor biplane for Curt Day, which was used in exhibitions that season. It was powered with a 50 h.p., 6-cylinder radial engine. During the summer months Benoist operated passenger-carrying planes at the Chicago Beach Hotel and Lincoln Park which did a substantial business. Work on the large twin-engine flying boat was carried on at St. Louis, and in December Rodger Jannus conducted a series of tests of this craft on the river north of that city. J.D. Smith was kept busy delivering and demonstrating new flying boats to purchasers.

In May, 1916, Benoist abandoned his St. Louis and Chicago operations and moved the business to Sandusky, Ohio, where he was located in a portion of the Roberts Motor Company shop. That summer he built and sold some all-new planes, one a 45-foot span land tractor biplane with with an all-steel fuselage and wood-framed cloth-covered wings. Another was a new pusher biplane flying boat, with the engine mounted between the wings having a direct-drive propeller, abandoning the engine in the hull with chain-propeller drive for the first time. During November Benoist entered a bid with the United States Government to supply military planes, but was not successful in getting an order.

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