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Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - DeHart, Dana C.

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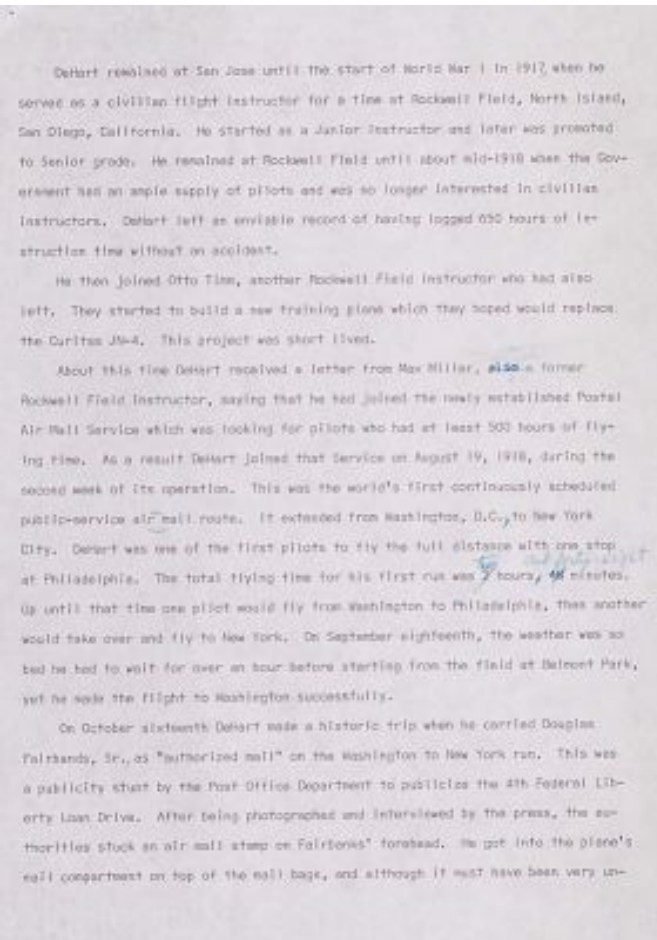
DeHart remained at San Jose until the start of World War 1 in 1917, when he served as a civilian flight instructor for a time at Rockwell Field, North Island, San Diego, California. He started as a Junior Instructor and later was promoted to Senior grade. He remained at Rockwell Field until about mid-1918 when the Government had an ample supply of pilots and was no longer interested in civilian instructors. DeHart left an enviable record of having logged 650 hours of instruction time without an accident.

He then joined Otto Timm, another Rockwell Field Instructor who had also left. They started to build a new training plane which they hoped would replace the Curtiss JN-4. This project was short-lived.

About this time DeHart received a letter from Max Miller, also a former Rockwell field instructor, saying that he had joined the newly established Postal Air Mail Service which was looking for pilots who had at least 500 hours of flying time. As a result DeHart joined that Service on August 19, 1918, during the second week of its operation. This was the world's first continuously scheduled public-service airmail route. It extended from Washington, D.C., to New York City. DeHart was one of the first pilots to fly the full distance with one stop at Philadelphia. The total flying time for his first run was ~~2~~ two hours ~~48~~ and forty-eight minutes. Up until that time one pilot would fly from Washington to Philadelphia, then another would take over and fly to New York. On September eighteenth, the weather was so bad he had to wait for over an hour before starting from the field at Belmont Park, yet he made the flight to Washington successfully.

On October sixteenth DeHart made a historic trip when he carried Douglas Fairbanks ~~[[Fairbanks]]~~, Sr., as "authorized mail" on the Washington to New York run. This was a publicity stunt by the Post Office Department to publicize the 4th Federal Liberty Loan Drive. After being photographed and interviewed by the press, the authorities stuck an air mail stamp on Fairbanks' forehead. He got into the plane's mail compartment on top of the mail bags, and although it must have been very uncomfortable

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