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Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Denehie, William A.

Extracted on Mar-29-2024 11:48:09

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two-cycle engine. When complete Denehie learned to fly the plane and Crawford entered and flew the machine in the Los Angeles Meet held January 20th to 28th, 1912.

After the event they continued their operations at Dominguez until Crawford had a forced landing in February and smashed the plane, then Denehie left to build a plane for himself in a barn near Inglewood, California. It was similar to the Crawford plane he had helped build except that it was double-surfaced and powered by a used Roberts engine. Denehie made many flights with this plane but was plagued with engine trouble and forced landings. He finally had a bad smashup when the engine quit shortly after take-off, but he was not injured.

Denehie sold the wreckage, quit aviation and joined the sales staff of Earle C. Anthony, Inc., automobile distributors. There one of his fellow employees was H. A. Sperl who had previously learned to fly at the Christofferson flying school, so a close relationship soon developed between them.

Denehie and Sperl remained on the Anthony auto sales staff until 1916, at which time they bought an OX-powered Gage tractor biplane and left on a barnstorming tour throughout the southwest, flying exhibitions and carrying passengers.

At the start of World War I Denehie joined the United States Army Air Service and was assigned Aviation Technician, Squadron "K" at Kelley Field, Texas, where he remained until discharged after the war in 1919. Following this he returned to Los Angeles and resumed barnstorming operations with Sperl until 1920 when they sold their plane and split up. Denehie then returned to the Anthony automobile Sales Agency, becoming Sales Manager of their Commercial Vehicle Department, selling Reo and Packard trucks.

About this time renowned race car driver Ralph DePalma was on the west coast with his "Packard Special" competing in local racing events and Denehie served as a member of his pit crew to some extent. At that time DePalma also had his 20 year old nephew, Peter DePaolo, serving with him on his staff of assistants.

In 1922 the Reo Motor Car Company withdrew the west coast sales franchise with the Anthony Company and established their own factory branch, headed by B. C. Foy, who assigned Denehie to the new Reo sales staff, where he remained

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