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Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Hoff, William H.

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North Island camp. There Hoff continued his instruction through late November and December, 1911 and flew his tests for a pilot license on January 2d, 1912, obtaining F.A.I. Certificate No. 91, dated January 17th, 1912, along with students J. W. McClaskey, S.C. Lewis, J. B. McCalley and C. W. Shoemaker.

At that time Curtiss was preparing to send his entire group of pilots and students to the 1912 Los Angeles Meet at Dominguez Field January 19th to 28th. Hoff was entered as a contestant at this event, one of the fourteen pilots sent there with seven planes. This was a large meet with sixteen of the leading U. S. pilots competing for honors and prizes. Hoff did exceptionally well considering this was his first public flying. He went in largely for speed contests and always came in second or third against more experienced pilots.

Following the Los Angeles Meet, Hoff was a contestant at the Oakland, California meet held at the Emeryville Race Track February 17th to 25th. Also flying there were Lincoln and Hillery Beachey, Glenn Martin, Blanche Scott, Farnum Fish, Weldon Cooke, Horace Kearney and Phil Parmelee. There Hoff had a very serious smashup before thousands of spectators. In a speed event on February 17th, the participants had from the center of the track, Lincoln Beachey taking off first, then Parmelee, with Hoff next. Hoff's 80 Model D Curtiss was much faster than Parmelee's Wright and before Hoff realized it he was immediately behind and dangerously close to Parmelee. Both planes were too low for him to go under Parmelee. Hoff attempted to go over, but stalled and rushed back into Parmelee's wake, lost control and crashed, hitting on the right lower wing rolling over several times. He certainly would have been killed had it not been for his crash helmet. As it was he suffered a mild concussion, his jaw was broken in two places, he had a dislocated shoulder, broken nose and pelvis.

After five years of recovery from his injuries he enlisted in the U. S. Army Aviation Corps where he served as a flying instructor through World War I. On December 26, 1917 Hoff obtained F.A.I. Expert Pilot License No. 157.

Following the war he resigned from the Service, gave up flying and settled

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