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Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives

Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Spencer, Percival

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at Farmingdale, Long Island, New York, where he assisted in the development of a 2-seat pusher amphibian flying boat. Spencer was there until 1940 when he sold his interest in the firm and the name was changed to the Colgate-Larsen Company of Amityville, Long Island, New York. Following this he designed and constructed another light sport amphibian which he intended for the post-war market. During World War II he was a test-pilot for Republic Aviation Corporation, Farmingdale, New York, ~~as a test pilot~~ on military aircraft, and while there assisted in the design and development of the well-known Republic "Seabee" a 4-place amphibian which gained much public acceptance after the war. In 1945 Spencer went west to join Lear, Incorporated, as a staff assistant at Santa Monica, California, where he remained until he retired.

Since retirement, and still living in California, he has been active in the design and development of rubber-powered model toy ornithopters which fly successfully and which have been made by concerns that bought manufacturing rights from him and who have sold them through toy stores everywhere. This was then followed by a larger gas-powered flying model of the ornithopter. Following many successful demonstrations, this is now in the National Air & Space Museum collection.

Spencer is a member of the Early Birds, QB's and National Aeronautic Association. He holds Commercial Pilot License No. 468 and Connecticut State License No. 17.

Flying Pioneer, ~~Early Bird~~ Percival H. Spencer is indeed an extraordinary aviation pioneer, having devoted his entire lifetime to the engineering, building, developing and flying of aircraft. Self-taught at an early age, he went on to become an outstanding figure in the aviation world and few men have contributed more to the development of aviation progress in the United States. Ingenious, creative and ever active his name ranks high in American aviation history.

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