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## **Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Sperry, Lawrence B.**

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the First Prize of \$10,000 against many foreign contestants.

At this time Lawrence was Manager of the Aviation Department of the Sperry Gyroscope Company. Returning to the United States he continued work on the stabilizer unit and assisted in other scientific aviation projects. Later in 1914 Lawrence and his father were awarded the distinctive Robert J. Collier Trophy for their success with gyro stabilizer developments.

In March, 1915 Lawrence gave flying demonstrations for Italian Naval Officers on the East River, New York. As a result three of their stabilizer units were sold to Italy, and M. F. Bates of the Sperry Company was sent there to install them. Early that spring Sperry was flying almost daily on the East River near the Brooklyn Navy Yard and developed a retractable two-wheel beaching gear for his flying boat. On April 23d he gave a lecture on their Auto-Pilot work at the Aero Club of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia. In July Lawrence was testing the new Sperry Drift Indicator. On August 14th he flew from the East River, Brooklyn, to Amityville, Long Island by way of Rockaway. At that time they were developing new air compasses, banking indicators and instruments to indicate the fore and aft position of the plane with reference to the true horizontal.

These developments continued in 1916, which required more flights tests, and that year they were also working on lights for night flying. On September 1st, 1916 Lawrence flew fifty miles, from Moriches, Long Island, to Amityville, at night, flying by compass, and landing by plane searchlights. That year the Sperrys were the recipients of another Robert J. Collier Award for their development of the Sperry Drift Indicator. On October 1st Sperry flew from Amityville to Cape Cod where he spent the night, then flew on to Boston, Massachusetts the next day, and the 24th returned to Long Island, carrying Robert Fowler. The entire flight was made by automatic pilot. On November 6th he flew over Manhattan at night and on November 16th, 1916 obtained F.A.I. Expert Pilot License No. 64.

In 1917 Lawrence supervised a Government [[corrected original spelling]] military guided missile project, called the "Sperry Aerial Torpedo". Intended to carry explosive charges, it was gyro controlled and launched on a pre-computed flight path. Glen Curtiss assisted in the design, a biplane large enough to carry a person and powered by a

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