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Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Waterman, Waldo D.

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closely followed those of the "Whatsit". Convinced of his chances Waterman then conducted further tests of the rebuilt "Whatsit" and as a result was awarded a Government contract to build a pusher, tailless, flying wing airplane in 1934 as a prototype for test evaluation. Completed in 1935, and called the "Arrowplane", this was an enclosed cabin swept-back high wing, tailless monoplane with a steerable tricycle gear and powered by a Menasco pusher engine. Although not roadable, initial flight tests of this machine exceeded expectations and Waterman started thinking about the machinery for roadability. Air Commerce Representative John H. Geisse, an amateur pilot with only 35 hours solo flying time, took delivery of the plane in California, flew it to Washington, D.C. and was delighted with its safe performance and ease of handling under all conditions.

The future of a real flying automobile looked so promising that the former President of T W A, H. M. Hanshue, offered Waterman financial aid to undertake such a project. The Waterman Arrowplane Corporation was formed and design work started to make the "Arrowplane" roadable. A gear reduction system to transmit power to the rear wheels was a necessity, a clutch to engage or disengage this system was required, as well as a means of de-clutching the propeller and quickly detachable wings. A Studebaker 100 H.P. 6-cylinder automobile engine was used, including the radiator and dash instruments. The engine was muffled and the rear wheels incorporated Bendix brakes. With standard automobile forward and reverse, a parking brake, foot throttle and rear view mirror, the top safe road speed was 70 M.P.H. This was called the "Arrowbile" and was a neat enclosed cabin, two seat side-by-side, high back-swept flying wing pusher monoplane with steerable tricycle landing gear. The first Aerobile was flown in February, 1937, then displayed at the Los Angeles Aircraft Show the following month. Three of these were then flown to, exhibited and demonstrated at the Cleveland National Races later that year. Six Arrowbiles were built, and both flying and road operating conditions were excellent. Just as its future seemed assured Mr. Hanshue died early in 1938 and his heirs were not interested in continuing the project. In July Waterman was hospitalized with a ruptured appendix and a long, critical illness

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