

BULLETINS

OF THE

Aerial Experiment Association

Bulletin No. XII

Issued Monday, Sept. 28, 1908

Mr. McCURDY'S COPY.

BEINN BHREAGH, NEAR BADDECK, NOVA SCOTIA

Bulletins of the Aerial Experiment Association.

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BULLETIN NO. XII ISSUED MONDAY SEPTEMBER 29, 1908.

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Being Breach, Near Baddeck, Nova Scotia.

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FOREWORD

The Chairman had arranged that this, the last Bulletin to be issued in the original year of our Association should be a Memorial Number, consisting of photographs recording the work so far accomplished by the Association. The Photographs were to be enlarged, and where no negatives or copies of desired pictures were at hand, these were to be first re-photographed.

In the absence of the Chairman a most loyal and earnest effort was made to carry out his wishes by the photographic staff assisted by Mr. Cox. They worked out of time, and until stopped on Sunday.

Unfortunately owing to the lack of proper facilities for the work and the total unexperience of the operator, it has been found impossible to produce pictures worthy of the Association and satisfactory to the Chairman.

In this emergency the conclusion was reached that it would be better to issue the Bulletin in this fragmentary form so that the weekly record of issue may not be broken. The photographs will now be left for the Chairman's decision, and can be issued later as a supplement.

Too much praise cannot be accorded Mr. Cox for the devotion he has displayed in this crisis. Without his willing and indefatigable co-operation it would have been necessary to have intermitted this weeks Bulletin altogether - an occurrence which we feel assured would have been regretted by the Chairman. M. G. B.

TO THE ASSOCIATES.

This Bulletin, issued in your absence, must not go without a few words of that which is filling all our hearts at this time.

On Thursday, September 17, the beautiful bond of companionship which we called "The Aerial Experiment Association" was broken, when Tom Selfridge sealed his devotion to our common cause with his life.

To-day in Washington the last military honors are being paid to him, as an officer who died in his country's service, and all over the world true hearts are sorrowing for the brave young life so suddenly cut down in its brilliant beginning,

(Mrs. Gresvener reports the fishermen in all the little St. Anne's hamlets are talking of nothing else).

They say Tom was happy, absolutely jubilant, and his was a glorious soldier's death, fame and honor are his, His name will be linked with aviation for all time. But - but we who knew him as he was, knew how much of achievement he had to give his country, and the world, how well fitted to live - what a friend, comrade, son and brother, true man and loving heart he was, find it hard to accept even this as best for him.

Others will place on record what Lieutenant Selfridge was as patriotic soldier, earnest worker in the struggle to win for mankind the highway of the air - will tell of his years of preparation and of what he was given opportunity to accomplish - to the Mother of the Association it may be permitted to speak of him as he was in the family.

When it was proposed to bring this strange young artillery officer into the family, enquiries were made concerning him. Most unfortunately the reply was not kept; but it said, "He is a chivalrous gentleman fond of such society as comes in his way". We found the report correct.

He was one of the most loveable boys I have ever known, good, true, gentle and affectionate. From the first day when, on my home-coming a year ago, he met me with friendly eyes and welcoming smile, to the last, when he bade us good-bye at the train in Bath, N.Y., he showed me the gentlest, most thoughtful consideration. None more quick than he to see what was wanted for my comfort or pleasure. He always found something to do, a chair to be placed at table, lights to be put right;- little unobtrusive acts of thoughtfulness which almost unnoticed at the time, were later missed. The same quiet kindness characterized his bearing to every other woman he came into contact with, so that to-day they cannot speak of him without tears. He so identified himself with everything that we each felt that our interests

were also his. He was so quiet it seems strange how large the place is he has left vacant. In his favorite khaki flannel shirt and old corduroy trousers, which had seen good service, and running about bareheaded, Tom was so simple and remote from display that at first it comes with almost a shock to think of him in connection with the pomp and circumstance of the military funeral he is receiving. On second thought, however, one realizes that such things meant much to him as part of the profession he loved, and that he was always conscious of his right to them.

Tom had a high sense of responsibility, it showed amusingly in his relation to his young twin brothers, in the little airs of elder brotherliness he assumed, and yet it was most beautiful. His father had left them to his care and their development into good men, morally, mentally and physically was a matter of anxious concern.

He was immensely pleased when they were invited to Beine Bhreagh, and devoted himself to taking them about showing them

everything and trying to improve their minds by making them observe the construction of the Tower, and watch the experiments at the Laboratory. Later we heard of his making trips to their school to pull them out of scraps, or to see they were properly cared for through illness. The same sense of responsibility cropped out every now and then in conversation, about the condition of our military forces, and in the discussion of ways of rendering them more efficient. One's abiding impression of him was of gentleness and stillness in rest - coupled with a sense of his underlaying strength and immovable determination. He was full of quiet fun and good humour, and I never saw him out of temper, although he did chafe occasionally at what he thought the Chairman's unnecessary caution in allowing flights. He took in amused good part the being unceremoniously bundled out of his room, as was sometimes unavoidable in unusual press of visitors. He asked nothing for himself; one felt he had long been accustomed to take care of himself, as well as of others, but whenever any little thing was done for his comfort or pleasure he noticed it at once and was pleased and grateful far beyond what was necessary.

One evening, towards the end, I came down stairs to find him waiting at the feet. He had pulled up a big armchair, arranged lamps behind so the light should be right. Placing me in it he knelt beside me and made a little speech undeterred, although somewhat interrupted by injections of "Be quiet boys", as the others chaffed him. He said he wanted to thank us for all we had done to make him so happy, and especially he wanted us to know how much he appreciated being allowed to be the one

to go up in the Cygnet, and how very grateful he was for that honor. Indeed his appreciation of people's kindness to him was unusual and charming. He was outspoken, never fearing to say just what he thought, but he never said unkind things of people - rather he constantly went out of his way to speak kindly of them. Anything he could do to help people he did. He was ready always - for work - or for play. He had a good time when there were parties here or across the water, but seemed perfectly content to sit quietly by the fire with his book or to listen with the slow pleasant smile that was one of his characteristics, while others talked or chaffed. Nothing escaped those bright brown eyes of his. He loved music and frequently set the graphophone going and remained alone in the dark dining room contently listening. He was genuinely fond of the children and often found his way alone to their nursery.

It was a good time that last year. I think none of us will forget it or cease to be glad of it. We will not forget the early summer fencing on the front veranda when Casey came down from his day's work on the Tower, and Tom and John from the Laboratory, the coming of the Wild Cat, the afternoon teas with the babies beside the big warm fireplace when the Associates came in cold and wet, and there were romps with little Mabel afterwards, the nightly games of billiards etc., or the Wednesday evenings of stories and songs, rifle shooting and banquets; or the home-comings after stormy weather on the Gaul-drie. It is good to think we had that year all together - that he was happy with us and loved us all even as we loved him.

And now we are all going forward with our lives -
thankful for having known him; thankful for the dear memory he
has left us of stainless, noble mankind, and his death will
have but cemented the bond between us who are left.

Beinn Bhreagh,
September 26, 1908.



COPIED FROM WASHINGTON POST.

Washington Post Sept. 20, 1908:- Telegraphic advices received at the War Department yesterday announced that Dr. Alexander Graham Bell, the aeronautical expert, with whom Lieut. Selfridge had been associated, was on his way to this city from Halifax, to attend the funeral. He is expected to arrive here to-day. Dr. Bell sent the following telegram to the father of Lieut. Selfridge on learning of the young man's death:-

"The Aerial Experiment Association wants you to know that your son, Tom, its Secretary, will be missed by the Association and its individual members, as your son is missed from the family circle.

"Alexander Graham Bell.
President".

Dr. Bell, in an interview, paid a tribute to the memory of Lieut. Selfridge, who, he said, was one of the most thorough aeronautical experts in this country. He criticised the construction of the Wright machine, declaring the two propellers should be operated by one shaft, instead of by two, and that had this form of power transmission been used the accident would not have occurred.

Dr. Bell further said that the experiments of the Association, of which he is President, will be continued, and that there will be important tests made at Hammondsport during the middle of October, when flying machines Nos. 5 and 6, now being built on the tetrahedral design will be used in ascents.

Washington Post.

TRIBUTE TO LIEUT. SELFRIDGE.

Washington Evening Star, Sept. 21, 1908:- Tribute was paid to the memory of Lieut. Selfridge at a meeting of the American Aerial Experiment Association held at the residence of Dr. Alexander Graham Bell to-day.

All the remaining members of the Association were present. These included Dr. Bell, the President of the Association; Glenn H. Curtiss, F. W. Baldwin and J.A.D. McCurdy.

Mr. McCurdy was elected Secretary of the Association in place of Lieut. Selfridge. Resolutions of regret were passed touching the death of Lieut. Selfridge. Resolutions of sympathy were drafted to be forwarded to Orville Wright.

The Selfridge resolution said that the Association wished to place on record its high appreciation of its last Secretary, who met his death in his effort to advance the art of aviation. The Association lamented the death of its dear friend and valued associate.

The United States Army, it said, loses a valued and promising officer, and the world an ardent student of aviation, who made himself familiar with the whole progress of the art of the art in the interest of his native country. It was resolved that a committee be appointed by the Chairman to prepare a biography of Lieut. Selfridge to be incorporated into the records of the Association, and that a copy should be transmitted to his parents.

The resolutions to Wright extended to him the deepest sympathy for his grief at the death of their associate, Lieut. Selfridge. The Association said they realized that in this

planning of the air, the unforeseen must sometime occur. They hoped, however, that Wright might soon recover from his severe injury and continue, in conjunction with his brother, Wilbur Wright, his splendid demonstration to the world of the great possibilities of aerial flight.

Luncheon was afterward served to the members of the Association, who were joined by Maj. Squier, the acting Chief Signal Officer.

Washington Evening Star.

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Telegrams from Members.

To Mrs. Alexander G. Bell,
Baddeck, N.S.

Washington, Sept. 26, 1908:- Selfridge at rest. Impressive military funeral yesterday. Selfridge's father present. At Association's meeting decided to continue without change for six months.

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(Extract from letter to Mrs. Bell by A. G. Bell).

Washington, D.C., Sept. 22, 1908:- We reached here Sunday afternoon. Monday, Sept. 21, we held a formal meeting of the Association, appointed Douglas McCurdy as Secretary, and passed resolution of appreciation of Selfridge, and resolution of sympathy for Orville Wright, who is lying at the military hospital at Fort Meyer suffering from very serious injuries. Newspaper reporters from a number of papers were on hand to know what the Association was doing.

Major Squier took lunch with us, also Mrs. Fairchild, Curtiss, Baldwin and McCurdy.

Cause of accident. Rudder wire caught in one of the propellers. Wire snapped and propeller broke. Under action of other propeller machine swung round in air. Wright then shut off engine and attempted to glide to ground, but the snapping of the rudder wire rendered the steering gear useless, and the machine began to fall without any means of controlling it excepting the front control. In his excitement Wright evidently raised the front control too much, or too quickly, causing head to rise with danger of sliding backwards, and this caused machine to lose its headway. Under these circumstances all control was lost, the weight of two men and the engine, all at the front part of machine, caused the head to point almost vertically downwards, and the machine dived towards the ground. Under the headway gained by the dive he might have regained control had he been further from the ground, and indeed it appeared that the machine was beginning to right, but there was not

room enough for a clearance of the ground. If he had had 15 or 20 feet more space for a drop there is little doubt that the disaster would have been only "an experience" as one of the papers puts it. As it was, the machine struck the ground with the full force of its fall, and all was over.

The fatal catastrophe was undoubtedly due to loss of headway.

Tuesday Sept. 22. This morning went out to Fort Meyer with Baldwin and McCurdy (Mr. Curtiss returned to Hammondsport yesterday and will return for the funeral when date is fixed). Called at the hospital and enquired for Orville Wright, who is too ill to receive visitors. We left our cards for him. He is doing as well as could be expected.

We then went to the building where the remains of the machine are housed and inspected the remains so far as accessible. I was sorry not to be able to see the broken propeller, as the propellers were boxed up ready for shipment to Dayton, Ohio. Sergeant Dowley (?) received us very courteously and showed us some splendid photographs of the apparatus.

We then went to the Arlington Cemetery to the Receiving Vault where poor Selfridge's remains lie awaiting interment. Then returned to Sergeant Dowley's tent to copy some details concerning various flights made by Orville Wright. Found Mr. Chanute there. He told us that Miss Wright was asleep having been up all night with her brother. Mr. Chanute returned to town with us and took lunch, and spent the whole afternoon with us. At lunch we had David Fairchild, Mr. Chanute, Mr. Baldwin, Mr. McCurdy, Mr. Cloudy (photographer for the N.Y. Herald), Mr. Cline (photographer for the Agricultural

Dept) and A. G. B.

Mr. Clowdy and Mr. Cline showed us the photographs they had taken of the flights.

They will supply the A.E.A. with a complete file of their photographs, and the Association will invite the public to send in photographs for preservation, so that the A.E.A. may make a historical exhibit of the historical flights of Orville Wright for permanent preservation. We propose to turn over the whole collection to the National Museum.

A letter has just arrived from the Acting President of the Aero Club appointing me the Chairman of a committee to represent the Aero Club at the funeral of Selfridge. I have thought it best to decline and have sent the following telegram to Mr. Hawley:-

With your permission I will ask Chanute to act as Chairman of Committee representing Aero-Club at funeral of Selfridge, as I will appear as Chairman of Aerial Experiment Association of which Selfridge was Secretary. Telegraph reply.

A.G.B.

WORK OF BEINN BHREAGH LABORATORY: by William
F. Bedwin, Superintendent.

Tried experiment with Dhennas Beag for pull and rotation with the double propellers; 6 feet long, 8 foot pitch (approximately). Results:- Rotations 550 in 30 seconds; pull maximum 115; steady at 105. ^{gear 9 to 14} This experiment was repeated twice.

The new double propellers are about ready to mount on the Dhennas Beag. Following are the measurements of these propellers. Diameter 2.08 meters; pitch 30° at tip. Width of blade 30 cm at tip, and 15 cm at hub. The blades of these propellers are made of laminated wood, double two mm thick, and fastened to skeleton frames with glue and screws, making a very strong and good propeller.

Aerodrome No. 5

Making good progress with aerodrome No. 5; have both faces and all the outside edges beaded. The center section of the quarter sized model of No. 5 aerodrome is finished and ready to insert in model structure. The half-sized center section is also well advanced and we are getting out the metal fastenings for the corners of it.

Good progress is being made with the white model of No. 6 Oionos machine. It is about all assembled and we are starting the beading of it at once.

Just received into stock a lot of fish-section material for No. 6 machine, size 7/16" 3 to 1.

Have men at work still on spherical connections for the cell sticks of No. 6 machine.

Washington Post, Sept. 20, 1908:— (Paris, Sept. 19). The Revue

d'Aviation to-day publishes a series of expert opinions concerning the work of various French and foreign aeroplans. The writers unanimously admit the present superiority of the Wright Brothers, principally on account of the double propellers, but they agree that the Wright machine is too cumbersome and large.

They insist that the machine of the future must, in

the first place, leave the ground making use of its own power alone, and second, be automatically stable, thus permitting any one who can ride a bicycle or drive an automobile to

handle it.

Washington Post.



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