

"All the News That's
Fit to Print."

The New York Times.

THE WEATHER.

Fair to-day and to-morrow; light
west wind, becoming variable.

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FATAL FALL OF WRIGHT AIRSHIP

Lieut. Selfridge Killed and Orville
Wright Hurt by Breaking
of Propeller.

MACHINE A TOTAL WRECK

Increased Length of New Blade
and Added Weight of a Pas-
senger Probable Causes.

CAVALRY RIDE DOWN CROWD

Rumor That the Machine Had Been
Tampered with Denied by Army
Officers—Not Well Guarded.

Special to The New York Times.

WASHINGTON, Sept. 17.—Falling from a height of 75 feet, Orville Wright and Lieut. Thomas E. Selfridge of the Signal Corps were buried in the wreckage of Wright's aeroplane shortly after 5 o'clock this afternoon. The young army officer died at 8:10 o'clock to-night. Wright is badly hurt, although he probably will recover. The flying machine is a mass of tangled wires, torn and twisted planes, and tattered canvas. The accident was due to the breaking of one of the blades of the propeller on the left side.

Although there had been but a handful of people at the aeronautical testing grounds at Fort Myer during the last few days, fully 2,000 had gathered by 4:30 this afternoon. The aeroplane was still in its shed, but Mr. Wright arrived a few minutes later and ordered it taken to the northern end of the field, to be placed on the starting track in readiness for a flight.

Selfridge in First.
Everybody was ordered back from the machine, and Mr. Wright turned to Lieut. Selfridge and said: "You might as well get in. We'll start in a couple of minutes."

Mr. Wright announced several days ago that he would take Lieut. Selfridge, who was Secretary of the Aerial Experiment Association and an aeroplane pilot himself, in his next flight. The young officer was delighted to have the opportunity. He was to leave Saturday for St. Joseph, Mo., where he was to assist Lieut. Foulis in operating the Baldwin airship at the coming army manoeuvres.

Ever since Monday the wind has prevented any attempt at flight. Each day Selfridge reported at the army post, and each day he returned to Washington disappointed. When the conditions to-day were found to be all that could be desired Selfridge made no effort to disguise his delight.

When Mr. Wright told him to get aboard Lieut. Selfridge jumped into his seat in the machine and looked as eager as a schoolboy for the test to begin. He took off his coat and hat.

Mr. Wright started the motor by means of a storage battery, his assistants, Taylor and Furness, turning the propellers to get them going. At 5:14 o'clock the aeroplane was released, and it was noticed that it did not rise as quickly from the ground as on previous two-man flights. Lieut. Selfridge weighed about 175 pounds, making the weight greater than the machine had ever carried before. Soon, however, it gained headway and arose.

Selfridge Enjoyed It Keenly.
As the aeroplane dashed off the rising track Lieut. Selfridge waved his hand gayly to a group of army officers and newspaper men and threw back some laughing remarks that were drowned in the whirl of the propellers. As he swept around Selfridge evidently was enjoying himself thoroughly. When the machine sailed above the heads of the crowd at the head of the field it could be seen plainly that he and Wright were holding an animated conversation. Selfridge interrupted this for a moment to wave a greeting to his friends.

The aeroplane had made three complete circuits of the big parade ground and was dashing around a curve at the far end of the field on the final lap of its fourth when the propeller blade broke. It snapped short off close to the shaft and was hurled sixty feet away.

The aeroplane seemed to tip sharply for a fraction of a second, then it started up for about ten feet; this was followed by a short, sharp dive and a crash in the field. Instantly the dust arose in a yellow, choking cloud that spread a dull pall over the great white man-made bird that had dashed to its death.

Crowd Hard to Manage.
From the largest crowd that has yet witnessed a flight there arose a cry that was neither a scream nor a groan. For a moment there was not a movement, and then the people surged across the field. Col. Hatfield, in command at the army post, issued some quick, sharp orders and the cavalry guard dashed forward. The crowd was frenzied and the cavalrymen were compelled to use actual force in many instances in controlling it. To cries of "Stand back, there," the press paid not the slightest attention. Many were friends of Wright or Selfridge, and these insisted upon crowding close.

"If they won't stand back, ride them down," was the order issued. And the troopers obeyed to the letter. None was seriously hurt in the crush of men and horses, but this was due only to a miracle.

While the cavalry was busy policing the spot, officers of the Signal Corps had dashed up and were assisting in extricating the two men from the wreckage. The first taken out was Wright, who was conscious. It was necessary to raise the planes to get at him. At almost the same moment Lieut. Selfridge was removed. He was lying partly under the engine and the fuel tank, and the strength of several powerful men had to be exerted before the man was taken off him. He was unconscious.

Both the injured men were covered with blood, and their clothing was torn and