Thomas O. Selfridge Encyclopedia Article

Thomas O. Selfridge

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Thomas O. Selfridge

1882?-1908

American military officer who was the first passenger to die in an airplane crash. Lieutenant Selfridge, fascinated by aviation, acted as the army's official liaison to the Aerial Experiment Association founded by Glenn Curtiss and Alexander Graham Bell. Assigned to evaluate a new Wright Brothers design for possible army use, Selfridge died of injuries suffered when the demonstration aircraft, piloted by Orville Wright, suffered a mechanical failure and crashed on September 17, 1908.