

# Lt. Benjamin D. Foulois



Inducted October 24, 1994

1879-1967

Operational Test Officer of Aeroplane  
Fort Sam Houston, Texas  
1910-1911

On February 10, 1910, Lt. Benjamin Foulois, eight enlisted men, one civilian mechanic, and one badly damaged aeroplane moved onto the mounted drill field on the northwest section of Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

The aircraft was a biplane purchased from the Wright Brothers in 1908. It was more of a contraption of bamboo poles and canvas fitted around a gasoline engine--a wheel-less, push-type stick and ginny, swung off the ground from a monorail--than it was an airplane.

Foulois and his "flying soldiers" had a mission of operational test and evaluation in Texas. "My experiments will cover a wide range and will continue at Fort Sam Houston for some time to come," stated Foulois, following his history-making first military flight in the State of Texas.

Foulois also conducted aerial photography experiments and is credited with making the first aerial map from an airplane, which was from Fort Sam Houston to Texas City, Texas. In addition, this innovative tester also devised the first known "safety belt," a four-foot trunk strap with which he lashed himself into the airplane.