

# *Continuum of Greatness*

*The Hall of Fame for Great Americans  
at Bronx Community College, CUNY*



*Wilbur Wright*

*1867 - 1912*

*Orville Wright*

*1871 - 1948*

## **Hall of Fame Facts**

### **Wilbur Wright (1867 - 1912)**

- Elected into Hall of Fame : 1955
- Wilbur Wright was among the three persons to be elected into the Hall of Fame
- Wilbur Wright received 86 votes, 25 more than were required
- Sculpture by : Vincent Glinsky

### **Orville Wright (1871 - 1948)**

- Elected into Hall of Fame : 1965
- Orville Wright was among the four persons to be elected into the Hall of Fame
- Orville Wright received 74 votes, 11 more than were required
- Sculpture by : Paul Fjelde

## Wilbur Wright

April 16, 1867 - May 30, 1912

## Orville Wright

August 19, 1871 - January 30,

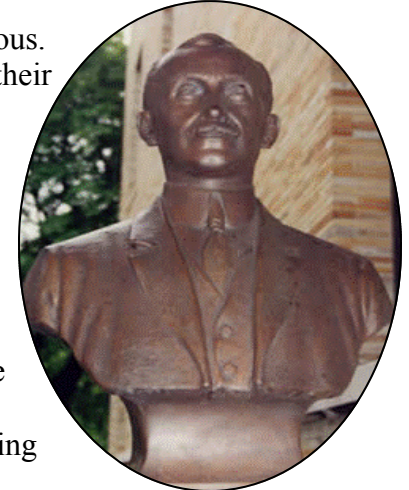


The Wright brothers built the first successful airplane. They made the first controlled, powered and sustained heavier-than-air flight on December 17, 1903. Their *Flyer* traveled all of 120 feet; the flight lasted 12 seconds. At the time it was considered a great achievement. The event, laughably modest by today's standards, was soon to have the most remarkable consequences. Following technical improvement, the two Ohio bicycle makers could claim by 1905 to have developed the first usable fixed-wing aircraft. Although they were not the first to build or fly experimental aircraft, the Wright brothers were the first to invent aircraft controls that made mechanical fixed wing flight possible

Their fundamental breakthrough was the invention of a "three axis-control", which enabled the pilot to steer the aircraft effectively while maintaining its equilibrium. This method would later become standard on fixed wing aircraft of all kinds. Following the example of Leonardo da Vinci, the brothers sought the secrets of flight by watching the airborne movement of birds. It was Wilbur who observed that birds changed the angle of the ends of their wings to make their bodies roll right or left. Both he and Orville decided this would also be a good way for a flying machine to turn—to "bank" or "lean" into a turn just like a bird - or just like a person riding a bicycle. They also used this method to help a plane recover when the wind tilted it to one side, thus affecting its lateral balance. The brothers' solution to their airplane's weight problem was equally ingenious. Unable to find a sufficiently light engine in the marketplace, they made their own, casting one from aluminum, itself a highly innovative practice in 1903.

Following the introduction of a separate rear rudder control in 1905, they were ready to market their new airplane, the *Flyer III*. The Wright Company was finally incorporated in 1909, with an airplane factory in Dayton, and company headquarters in New York City.

The company immediately set out to train pilots. Between 1910 and 1916 the company flying school at Huffman Prairie trained over one hundred. Henry "Hap" Arnold, who would eventually become a Five-Star General commanding



1903

↓  
The Wright Brothers achieve their first successful flight

1918

↓  
The first limited U.S. airmail service is introduced

1919

↓  
A United States Navy hydroplane with multiple crew members the first successful transatlantic flight

1927

↓  
Charles Lindbergh makes the first non-stop solo transatlantic flight from New York to Paris



1941

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Britain successfully tests the first turbojet fighter

1944

↓  
Germany introduces the first jet fighter, the Messerschmitt 262, in combat

1946

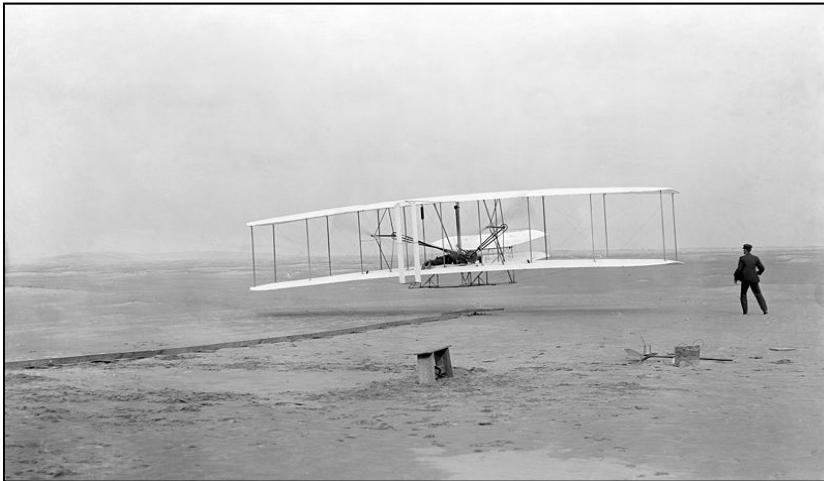
↓  
TWA introduces post-war commercial transcontinental service between New York and Paris



the U.S. Army Air Forces in World War II, and later first head of the U.S. Air Force, was among them.

The Wright brothers efforts were at first premature. There was little demand for airplanes. They turned to “stunts” to advertise their product. In 1910 two bolts of silk were flown from Dayton to Columbus in the first commercial air cargo flight. At a cost of \$5,000.00, further deliveries were deemed impractical. The following year, another stunt, the first coast-to-coast flight made by another Wright brothers trained pilot, was only accomplished with many stops and problems.

Following the death of Wilbur in 1912, Orville decided in 1915 to sell the company. He would later become an elder statesman of aviation, serving as a member of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, that would later be superceded by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Towards the end of his life, Orville was honored by Trans World Airline (TWA). In 1933, a *Lockheed Constellation*, piloted by Howard Hughes had just flown from Burbank, California to Washington, D.C. in 6 hours and 57 minutes. On the return trip, the aircraft stopped at Wright Field to give Orville Wright his last airplane flight. Orville noted with some wonder that the wingspan of the *Constellation* was longer than the distance of his own first flight, more than forty years previously; yet it had launched the entire aeronautics industry. Orville Wright died in 1946. The epitaph, written by a grieving father for Wilbur more than thirty years earlier, might serve for both brothers. Theirs were lives “full of consequences ... of unfailing intellect, imperturbable temper, great self-reliance and as great modesty, seeing the right clearly, pursuing it steadfastly, (they) lived and died.”



Written and compiled by David Gordon.  
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1947

↓  
Pan Am introduces regularly scheduled around the world service on its *America Clipper*

1958

↓  
Boeing introduces the “jet age” with the first commercially successful jet service



1976

↓  
The supersonic commercial jet is introduced by British Airways and Air France



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