



# Flightlines

## The Centennial of Powered Flight (1903-2003)

### After the First Wright Flight

This article is 4th in a series of historical focus stories to commemorate the Centennial of Powered Flight, offered only in ODA FLIGHTlines, during 2003.

After 1903, Wilbur & Orville Wright carved brilliant careers in aeronautics and helped found the aviation industry. Their successful flights made at Kill Devil Hills near Kitty Hawk in December 1903 encouraged them to make improvements on the design for a new plane that they called "Flyer No. 2." They flew nearly 100 flights near Dayton throughout 1904, totalling only 45 minutes in the air overall, but that total included two flights that each lasted five minutes.

Two years of focused work on control and maneuver capabilities for Flyer No. 2 resulted in design of a vastly improved aircraft in 1905. On October 5th, the Wrights made a record flight of 241 miles, with their Flyer No. 3 in the air a continuous 38 minutes, 3 seconds. This success meant that the era of the airplane was well on the way.

The Wrights found themselves receiving business overtures from representatives of foreign governments to sponsor production of their aircraft. However, the Wrights agreed they wanted the U.S. Government to have a world monopoly on their patents as well as all the aerodynamic, design and pilotage secrets they now held. The brothers faced disappointment when the United States Army turned down their first offers, without so much as making an effort to investigate whether the airplane had actually been brought to a stage of practical operation. But Orville and Wilbur did not give up. Over the course

of the next few years, U.S. disbelief began to diminish. At last - in February 1908 - the United States War Department made a contract with the brothers for an airplane. The Army contract came only three weeks after the Wrights closed their first contract with a Frenchman to form a foreign syndicate for the rights to manufacture, sell and license the use of the Wright airplane in France.

The Wright aircraft experienced some remarkable redesign features by 1908. No longer did the pilot lie prone with his hips in a cradle on the lower wing. Instead, control levers were now used from a sitting position. A seat had also been added for a passenger.

The brothers brought this newly designed airplane to the Kitty Hawk Kill Devil Hills in April 1908 to practice handling the new control lever arrangement. This was the final step in ensuring they were ready for public trials near Washington, D.C. for both the U.S. Government and the French.

The Wrights erected a new building in 1908 at Kill Devil Hills, large enough for them to live in as well as to house their new aircraft. Terrible storms the previous year had nearly demolished



Orville and Wilbur Wright

their 1903 camp and its buildings. Between May 6 and May 14, 1908, the Wrights made 22 flights at their old, familiar testing grounds in their newest aircraft. On May 14th, the first flight with two men aboard was made, with Wilbur Wright as pilot and mechanic Charles Furnas as passenger. Orville and Furnas made a second flight together that same day in 1908, traveling a total of more than two miles.

Newspaper reporter

Byron R. Newton was concealed in the woods with other newsmen near the Kitty Hawk camp to watch the Wrights fly their newest contraption that day. In his diary, Newton predicts the following just after seeing his first flight: "Someday Congress will erect a monument here to these Wrights." Nineteen years later, the U.S. Congress established the area as a national memorial that exists to this day.

Wilbur journeyed to France in mid-1908 after completing the tests at Kill Devil Hills to start work on the French contract, while Orville returned home to complete the construction of their first airplane for the United States Government.

As Wilbur set about methodically to assemble his airplane at Le Mans, some 125 miles from Paris, aeronautics skeptics in Europe scoffed at the time it took to

(story continued on page 7)

*Flightlines* is an official publication of the Oregon Department of Aviation. The intent of *Flightlines* is to keep the aviation community and others informed of developments in aviation, as well as aviation events across Oregon. Circulation is 7,000 copies.

Oregon Department of Aviation was founded in 1921 as the first government aviation agency in the United States. The Department is dedicated to developing and improving Oregon's aviation system. ODA's goals include:

- developing aviation as an integral part of Oregon's transportation network,
- creating and implementing strategies to protect and improve Oregon's aviation system,
- encouraging aviation-related economic development,
- supporting aviation safety and education, and
- increasing commercial air service and general aviation in Oregon.

Director  
Oregon Department of Aviation  
Ann B. Crook, CM

Flightlines Editor  
Carolyn R. Bolton

The State Aviation Board consists of seven members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Oregon Senate. The Board provides policy direction to the Director and the Department.

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7th position - Currently VACANT

Comments and suggestions about *Flightlines* are welcome. Printing of articles submitted independently is subject to available space and editorial review. All comments or submissions should be directed to:

Carolyn R. Bolton, *Flightlines* Editor  
Oregon Department of Aviation  
3040 25<sup>th</sup> Street SE  
Salem, OR 97302-1125  
Telephone: 800.874.0102, ext. 223  
Fax: 503.373.1688  
E-mail: [Carolyn.R.Bolton@state.or.us](mailto:Carolyn.R.Bolton@state.or.us)

Find us on the web at:  
<http://www.aviation.state.or.us>

## The Director's Desk



by Ann Crook,  
Director

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

**S**unday, October 26th at 2:00 p.m. we will celebrate the Centennial of Powered Flight at the Evergreen Aviation Museum in McMinnville.

This special event will be our opportunity to reflect on the achievements in aviation in the last 100 years, particularly those achievements of Oregonians. Our Centennial Event will feature food and dancing, inspirational speakers, admission to the museum, and the inauguration of the Oregon Aviation Hall of Honor. Tickets are \$50 per person. For more information and to make reservations call (503) 434-4272.

At this historic inaugural event, these nine aviators will be inducted into the Oregon Aviation Hall of Honor:

**Colonel Rex T. Barber, USAF**  
WWII P-38 *Lightning* Pilot who shot down Japanese Admiral Yamamoto, 1943: posthumous.

**Major General Marion Carl, USMC**  
WWII United States Marine Corps Ace, 1942, Navy Test Pilot, Marine Corps Commander: posthumous.

**Major General Gordon Lewis Doolittle**  
Former Chief of Staff, Oregon Air National Guard Founder, and WWII Fighter Pilot: living.

**Ken Jernstedt, Flying Tigers**  
American Volunteer Group *Flying Tiger* Flight Leader and Ace: living.

**Lt. David R. Kingsley**  
WWII U.S. Army Air Corps Second Lieutenant, Congressional Medal of Honor: posthumous.

**General Merrill A. "Tony" McPeak**  
Four-star general, Retired Air Force Chief of Staff: living.

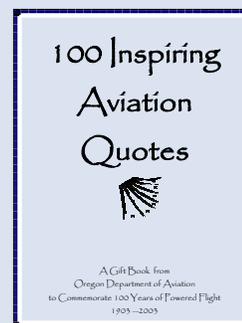
**Melvin Jack Murdock**  
Co-founder, Tektronix, Inc., private pilot, and aviation buff: posthumous.

**Tex Rankin**  
WWI U.S. Army Air Corps, barnstormer, and aerobatics instructor: posthumous.

**Jack G. Real**  
Aviation Engineer, advisor to Howard R. Hughes: living.

Oregon Department of Aviation is pleased to partner with Evergreen Aviation Museum to commemorate the Centennial of Flight and celebrate these outstanding aviators. We hope you will join us. ■

### Centennial Gift Book



On October 1, 2003, Oregon Department of Aviation will release its newest product - a beautiful gift book of aviation quotes, prepared to commemorate the Centennial of Flight.

"100 Inspiring Aviation Quotes" is sure to please aviation enthusiasts and ground lovers alike - and will inspire everyone who reads its pages to marvel at the miracle of flight.

For your copy, visit our web page and click on "What's New" - where you can either download or order your own copy. Or contact Carolyn Bolton at [Carolyn.R.Bolton@state.or.us](mailto:Carolyn.R.Bolton@state.or.us) or 800-875-0102. **Happy Centennial!** ■

## “Century of Flight” Exhibit at Capitol a Great Success

For three week in August, an exhibit presenting a blend of art and historical artifacts drew the attention of hundreds at the Oregon State Capitol Galleria in Salem. Sponsored by the Department of Aviation, the exhibit celebrated “A Century of Flight.” Focal to the exhibit’s purpose was a traveling exhibit from U.S. Centennial of Flight Commission in Washington, D.C., which portrayed key scenes from the 1st century of aviation & aerospace against a vignette of an early Wright Brothers flight. A highlight of the exhibit was the formal display of original winning artwork from the Oregon state competition of the 2003 International Aviation Art Contest depicting “100 Years of Powered Flight.”

The majority of exhibit items were loaned by the Oregon Air & Space Museum in Eugene. Numerous impressive collector art pieces were made available, as well as what proved to be a central drawing point to the exhibit - a “Space Time Line” - that juxtaposed significant aerospace achievements over concurrent historical world events. U.S. Airline Historian Dave Galbraith provided a rare portfolio of Franklin Institute reproductions of original Wright Brothers documents, including photographs, sketches, patent applications and more. Mr. Galbraith also loaned hand-built models (1/72 scale) of early aircraft, including the Wright flyer.



Many thanks to Oregon Air & Space Museum for partnering with Department of Aviation on this one-of-a-kind exhibit effort. Be sure to call to arrange your visit to the Museum, located just outside Eugene. Their number is (541) 461-1101. It is truly one of Oregon’s “best kept secrets”! ■

### CALENDAR SUBMISSION DEADLINES

We would welcome the opportunity to publicize aviation events on the FLIGHTlines calendar! Events scheduled between January 1 and March 31, 2004, must be submitted by December 1, 2003 (in format similar in length and content to that found on this page) to Carolyn Bolton in order to appear in the Winter 2004 publication. Submit via e-mail to Carolyn.R.Bolton@state.or.us, via fax to Carolyn at 503.373.1688, or via mail to Carolyn’s attention at Department of Aviation, 3040 25th Street SE, Salem, OR 97302-1125.

**WE HOPE TO HEAR FROM YOU!** ■

## ODA Employee Updates



### Welcomel

**Rick Leontiev** is the agency’s new Engineering Technician. Rick’s most recent experience was with Enron, where he managed the drafting group for the Broadband Division. He brings a wealth of knowledge in multi-discipline

drafting and design utilizing AutoCad, and is familiar with most Microsoft products and operating systems. We are pleased to welcome Rick to the Team.

### Good-Bye ...

**Angela Logan**, ODA’s Office Manager and Director’s Assistant, left the agency in August 2003 to pursue other interests.

**Rebecca Jasso**, former Fiscal Analyst at the Department, accepted a lateral move to Oregon Department of Administrative Services Shared Client Services, where she will work with a dozen small agencies and commissions. Rebecca worked at Department of Aviation for eight years, working her way to Fiscal Analyst from an entry-level clerical position. She will be missed! ■

## Oregon Aviation Calendar

### OCTOBER

**15 FAA Safety Seminar**, hosted by EAA Chapter #319 - “Winter Flying & Icing for GA Pilots,” 7-9 p.m. At Rogue Valley Medical Center, Smullin Center Auditorium, 2825 Barnett Road, Medford. Admission is free; refreshments available. Info: Linda Ross, (541) 858-1093 or (541) 858-0642.

**26 Centennial of Powered Flight Celebration**, 2 p.m. at Evergreen Aviation Museum, McMinnville; co-sponsored by Oregon Department of Aviation. Cost: \$50 per person. Info & reservations: (503) 434-4272.

### NOVEMBER

**19 State Aviation Board meeting**, Pendleton, location TBD. Info: Carolyn Bolton, (800) 874-0102, ext. 223 or Carolyn.R.Bolton@state.or.us.

### DECEMBER

**No events submitted.**

### Recurring

**Monthly, first Saturday: EAA 105 Blueberry Pancake B’fast.** Stark’s TwinOaks Airpark; 8-10 am. ■

## From the State Aviation Board



by  
*Bill Wilkins*  
**Board Chair  
Corvallis**

In efforts to include as many members of Oregon aviation community as possible in the conversations of the State Aviation Board, and to expand the Board's understanding of the Oregon aviation system, the State Aviation Board chose several years ago to hold its meeting in cities around the state. During the earlier months of the 2003 Oregon Legislative Session, the Board's bi-monthly meetings were scheduled to be held in or near Salem. (For example, the May meeting was in Independence). With the advent of summer, the meetings of the Board moved outside of the Willamette Valley.

July's meeting in Burns provided a variety of examples that underscored the value of scheduling Board meetings in varied locations across Oregon. Board members had a chance to both utilize and tour the Burns Municipal Airport, gaining first-hand appreciation of its strengths and needs. The day of the Board meeting started with an informal early morning coffee reception which was attended by the Mayor, County Judge, members of the City Council, City Manager, the local business development officer, and airport users as well as Board members and Department of Aviation staff. The formal Board meeting itself, which was held in the Malheur Education Service District (EDS) Conference Room, included a presentation about the Burns Municipal Airport by the City Manager. That afternoon, the City of Burns and Airport Advisory Committee hosted an

"Aviation BBQ" which was followed by an Aviation Town Hall at the Burns Airport that evening.

At the same time that the Board was in Burns, gaining key insights to the needs and challenges of a rural Oregon airport, one of the major agenda items for the July Board meeting was the review and approval of a staff recommendation for amending the leasing rates at the Aurora State Airport. Burns is a long way from Aurora. Happily, a number of members of the Aurora State Airport user community were able to attend and make public comments in person. However, the combination of the location of the meeting and the content of the agenda highlighted a possible need for an alternative electronic option to enable members of the general public to take part in Board deliberations.

The Board is familiar with teleconferencing processes, having utilized speaker phones in the past to include distant Board members unable to attend a meeting in person. In fact, when member Carrie Novick has been unable to attend in

person, she has included interested people from the aviation community in the meeting via the speaker telephone from her Redmond Airport office.

One member of the Aurora State Airport user community suggested that such access be made routinely available to the public, a concept which both Director Ann Crook and the Board believe is worthy of being tested. Teleconferencing was offered for the Burns meetings, but there were no users. Nevertheless, speaker phone access to Board meetings will be made available on a test basis at the offices of the Department of Aviation in Salem for the September meeting in Klamath Falls and November meeting in Pendleton.

Anyone who wishes to participate in the remaining 2003 meetings of the State Aviation Board via this new means need only give 48-hours notice and then come to the Department of Aviation just prior to the Board meeting start-time.

We'll see how this new public involvement opportunity works and build from there. ■

## State-Owned Airports Update

During the months of July and August, the seven capital improvements projects slated for summer 2003 were successfully awarded. All projects were bid at or below budget, and the contractors have been mobilized.

The **Aurora State Airport** fencing project is nearly complete as this newsletter is going to press, with the **Lebanon State Airport** fencing project closely following.

The contractor for **Joseph State Airport** has scheduled extended hours at no additional cost over bid in order to successfully win the race with the Eastern Oregon winter weather. That airport is getting a parallel taxiway, PAPIs, REILs, lighting and marking.

The **Condon State Airport** and **Wasco State Airport** projects are on track and it appears that both will meet or exceed the schedule restrictions. Condon is undergoing major rehabilitation, including taxiway rehabilitation, apron expansion and security lighting. Apron expansion is also taking place at Wasco, plus security gating and relocation of the beacon.

**Chiloquin State Airport** and **McDermitt State Airport** will both be constructed during the month of September. McDermitt will have a runway surface overlay, while at Chiloquin projects include reconstruction of the access road as well as security fencing.

We're pleased that this long, dry Oregon summer has enabled the successful completion of these important improvement projects at our state-owned airports. ■

## 2003 Aviation Art Contest Winners Honored in Salem

The Department of Aviation serves as the Oregon sponsor for public and private school children in kindergarten through 12th grade to participate each year in an art contest that has national and international dimensions. The theme for 2003 Aviation Art Contest was "100 Years of Flight," in honor of the Wright Brothers' successful flight on December 17, 1903.

Each year, the contest encourages youth ages 6 to 17 from all over the world to reflect on aviation by designing a piece of art based upon each year's chosen theme. The national competition is convened by the National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO) in Washington, D.C. The international level is then co-sponsored by the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI), the National Association of State Aviation Officials Center for Aviation Research and Education (NASAO Center), the National Aeronautics Association (NAA), the National Air and Space Administration, and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).



Attending the August 2003 Aviation Art Contest Celebration were (L to R): **Trey Davenhill**, 1st Place Age 6-9; **Brenton Groves**, 2nd Place Age 14-17; and **Zachary Steele**, 3rd Place Age 6-9.

Young people have the opportunity to place 1st, 2nd or 3rd in each of three separate age categories. Oregon's 2003 winners received a beautiful, framed award certificate and a U.S. Savings Bond. They were also honored guests at a special reception held in their honor in the Department's courtyard in Salem on August 15, 2003. Parents, siblings, grandparents, teachers and principals attended with this year's winners. Following a short ceremony and refreshments, they all were whisked away to view their winning artwork on display at the Oregon State Capitol Galleria, where it was a central part of an exhibit of art and historical artifacts commemorating the Centennial of Flight. They also received a 90-minute tour of the historic Oregon Capitol - complete with a climb to the observation deck in the Rotunda, for those up to the long spiral stairway challenge!

### AGE 6-9:

**Trey Davenhill**,  
1st Place Age 6-9  
Christian Center  
Academy, Salem,  
2003.



**Lauren DeVries** took 2nd Place in the 6-9 age bracket and **Zachary Steele** won 3rd Place. All age 6-9 winners attend Christian Center Academy in Salem.

### AGE 10-13:

**Bradi Voigt**,  
1st Place  
Age 10-13,  
Prairie City  
School, 2003



**Matt Miller** of Prairie City School won 2nd Place in age 10-13 and **Gricel Martinez** of Mt. Angel Middle School placed 3rd.

### AGE 14-17:

**Christina Butler**,  
1st Place  
Age 14-17  
Prairie City  
School, 2003.



**Brenton Groves** of Prairie City School won 2nd Place in the 14-17 age bracket, and **Kala Regimbal** took 3rd Place.

### Department of Aviation extends congratulations to these winning young artists! ■

**The 2004 Aviation Art Contest** is already underway, with Oregon entries to be postmarked no later than January 10, 2004, and submitted to Carolyn Bolton at Department of Aviation. Information has already been mailed to all public and private schools in Oregon - but we know there is great value in having local aviation enthusiasts do a little grassroots encouragement to get youth in their community involved. Call Carolyn at 800-874-0102, ext. 223, to request a brochure. ■

## PMP Program Improves Oregon Airport Surfaces

The Department's 2003 Pavement Maintenance Program (PMP) improved runways at eleven Oregon airports, designated in the PMP as the "Southern Region." In August 2002, the construction contract for work in 2003 was awarded to Ashwood Construction of Tualatin. Department funding allocated to this year's projects totaled \$827,500, with \$121,100 in local match from airport sponsors bringing the overall program total to \$948,600.

The following airports received the necessary combination of crack seal, asphalt concrete patching, slurry seal, and restripe of pavement marking during Summer and Fall 2003:

- Ashland Municipal Airport
- Bandon State Airport
- Brookings Airport
- Cottage Grove State Airport
- Creswell Municipal - Hobby Field
- Florence Municipal Airport
- Gold Beach Municipal Airport
- Grants Pass Airport
- Illinois Valley Airport
- Roseburg Regional Airport
- Sunriver Airport

Pavement evaluations are currently being completed at Oregon Airports in the PMP "Eastern Region" airports during Fall 2003, and the Pavement Maintenance Program will begin maintenance work at those airports in Summer 2004. ■

### For More Information ...

... concerning the FAM Grant or PMP Programs, contact:

Teddie Baker  
 Oregon Department of Aviation  
 3040 25th Street SE  
 Salem, OR 97302-1125  
 Telephone: 800.874.0102, ext. 234  
 E-mail: teddie.a.baker@state.or.us ■

## FAM Grants Awards Announced

The 2003-2005 biennial budget for Department of Aviation includes an unprecedented \$650,000 for Financial Assistance to Municipalities (FAM) Grants. At their July 2003 meeting in Burns, the State Aviation Board approved FAM Grant awards to 23 Oregon Airports. Each airport will receive \$10,000 under designated program specifications:

- Albany Municipal Airport.** Sponsor-funded security system improvements including installation of security cameras and recording equipment for the ramp and other areas of the airport where theft and vandalism has occurred.
- Astoria - Port of Astoria Airport.** Federally-funded AIP project to complete wildlife security fencing; improve the runway safety area at both ends of Runway 13/31, and a Wildlife Hazard Assessment to be completed by the USDA Wildlife Services.
- Bend Municipal Airport.** Federally-funded AIP project to install an AWOS.
- Boardman Airport.** Federally funded AIP project to construct new airport access road, expand apron, and construct taxiway.
- Brookings Airport.** Federally-funded AIP project to install PAPIs, construct taxilane for future hangar development, perimeter fencing, and pave around fuel island.
- Columbia Gorge Regional Airport.** Sponsor-funded project to install sewer/water infrastructure to facilitate Sponsor's nested-T hangar development.
- Corvallis Municipal Airport.** Federally-funded AIP project to construct holding apron on Taxiway A, extend Taxiway B, install edge lighting on Taxiways A and B, relocate the rotating beacon, construct a fire lane access, and fencing improvements.
- Creswell Hobby Field.** Sponsor-funded upgrade of electrical system in terminal building and installation of individual electrical meters to all tenants in building.
- Grant County Regional Airport.** Sponsor-funded project to engineer water/sewer services to airport. The airport has reached capacity with its current water/sewer system.
- Jordan Valley Airport (future).** Sponsor-funded project to re-zone the site of the proposed airport from the "Exclusive Ranch Use" to "Airport Zone" consistent with the State's Land Use Compatibility Guidelines.
- Grants Pass Airport.** Federally-funded AIP project to rehabilitate apron areas and taxilanes.
- Lakeview Airport.** Federally-funded AIP project to install a Medium Intensity Runway Lighting system, Runway End Identification Lights, and taxiway retro reflective markers.
- Lexington Airport.** Sponsor-funded project to complete a 2-inch asphalt apron overlay.
- Madras City-County Airport.** Federally-funded AIP project to complete taxiway rehabilitation.
- Newport Municipal Airport.** Sponsor-funded project to install electrical lines, drainage, and associated infrastructure to facilitate construction of new, city-owned hangars.
- Ontario Municipal Airport.** Federally-funded project to acquire land in the runway protection zone and install perimeter security fencing.
- Prineville Airport** Federally-funded project to rehabilitate the apron and expand/rehabilitate the taxiway.
- Roberts Field-Redmond Municipal.** Sponsor-funded project to overlay the general aviation parking ramp.
- Rogue Valley International-Medford.** Sponsor-funded project to crack seal and slurry seal general aviation taxiways and to crack seal Runway 9/27.
- Roseburg Regional Airport.** Phase III of a federally-sponsored AIP project to purchase and relocate 83 mobile homes in the Town & Country Mobile Home Park.
- Scappoose Industrial Airpark.** Federally-funded AIP project to complete the installation of perimeter security fencing and update the Airport Master Plan.
- Tillamook Airport.** Federally-funded AIP project to improve air navigational aids: installation of AWOS, PAPIs, medium intensity runway lighting system (MIRLS), new rotating beacon and segmented circle; improvement to the airport public entry road, construction of a pilot hangar access road, and apron reconstruction.
- Vale - Miller Memorial Airpark.** Sponsor-funded project to have a comprehensive Airport Master Plan developed and to chip seal the runway. ■

construct the craft - which they called a "delay" - and accused him of bluffing. But Wilbur refused to hurry. When Wilbur took off on August 8, circling the field to come in for a perfect landing, those in the large crowd that had gathered could scarcely believe their eyes. Skeptics were confounded and enthusiasts uproarious.

Wilbur's utter lack of conceit, together with his human decency and clear intelligence, won an attitude of hero-worship from the French people, while the press was unsparing in its praise and lamented having called him a bluffer. The *Figaro* commented, "It was not merely a success but a triumph; a conclusive trial and a decisive victory for aviation, the news of which will revolutionize scientific circles throughout the world." This statement to the press by a witness, Maj. B. F. S. Baden-Powell (President of the Aeronautical Society of Great Britain), is perhaps most often quoted: "That Wilbur Wright is in possession of a power which controls the fate of nations is beyond dispute." One of Wilbur's comments in France that exemplifies his humility quickly became famous: "I know of only one bird, the parrot, that talks," he quipped, "and it can't fly very high."

Orville's first public flight in his new aircraft was September 3, 1908, at Fort Myer. He circled the field one and one-half times on the first test. "When the plane first rose," Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., recorded, "the crowd's gasp of astonishment was not alone at the wonder of it, but because it was so unexpected." Orville's final flight at Fort Myer ended in tragedy. The airplane crashed, killing Lt. Thomas Selfridge, a passenger flying with Orville. Orville suffered broken ribs, a fractured leg and hip injuries.

In mid-1909, Orville completed the Government test flights by flying 10 miles in 14 minutes (or just under 43 m.p.h.). The United States Army formally accepted its first airplane from the Wrights shortly thereafter, on August 2nd. During the same year, both brothers made further flying triumphs in Europe,

where they became famous flying in France and Italy. While Orville was making sensational flights in Germany (as required for the formation of a Wright company in that country), Wilbur returned to America to fly at New York City, where more than a million astonished New Yorkers got their first glimpse of an airplane in flight.

Commercial companies were formed in both France and Germany to manufacture Wright planes some time before the Wright Company was successfully organized in the U.S., with Wilbur as president and Orville vice president. The Wrights were remarkably shrewd in business affairs — a match for both American or European businessmen. They grew wealthy as well as famous, but quickly realized they were much happier devoting themselves to issues of scientific research rather than the minutia of day-to-day business.

Orville returned to Kill Devil Hills in October 1911 to experiment with a new automatic control device. Although tests of the new device were planned to take place in a Wright glider, they were delayed because of the presence of newspapermen at the camp each day. Ultimately, Orville set a new world's soaring record of 9 minutes and 45 seconds on October 24, 1911. This remained the world's record until it was finally exceeded 10 years later in Germany.

On May 30, 1912, Wilbur Wright, aged 45, died of typhoid fever. Orville survived him by 36 years.

### Orville - The Later Years

With his beloved brother and partner now gone - and patent disputes and business troubles behind him - Orville Wright returned to West Dayton and built a small laboratory in his old neighborhood. He continued aeronautical work, helping to develop a racing airplane, a guided missile, and "split flaps" to help slow an aircraft in a dive. But he also worked on an automatic record changer, a toaster, and various children's toys. In short, he

tinkered with whatever caught his interest.

His fame as the co-inventor of the airplane endured, however, and he put it to good use. He was on the original board of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) and served longer than any board member since. (NACA later became NASA, the National Air and Space Administration.) He helped oversee the Guggenheim Fund for the Promotion of Aeronautics, an effort that helped America recapture the technological lead in aviation during the 1930s. He also worked tirelessly to help unknown inventors bring their ideas to market.

After the First World War, the Smithsonian exaggerated the contributions of a man named Langley to the field of aeronautics, while seeming to belittle the Wrights Brothers' accomplishments. Friends of Orville tried to set the record straight, but the Smithsonian persisted. In retaliation, Orville sent the 1903 Wright Flyer - the original airplane in which he and Wilbur made the first powered flights at Kitty Hawk - to the Science Museum in South Kensington, England (near London). In the 1930s, Charles Lindbergh, the first aviator to fly from New York to Paris nonstop, attempted unsuccessfully to mediate the feud. In 1942, Orville's friend and biographer, Fred Kelly, convinced the Smithsonian to back down and publish the true story. That done, Orville sent word to England that the Wright Flyer No. 1 was to be brought home to America. Its safe return was delayed by WWII, but it was finally back on U.S. soil by 1948.

Orville's last big project was, fittingly, an aircraft. He helped to rebuild the 1905 Wright Flyer No. 3, the first practical airplane, which he and Wilbur had perfected at Huffman Prairie. This was put on display at Deeds Carillon Park in Dayton, Ohio in 1950, but Orville did not live to see the ceremony. He died of a heart attack in 1948 while fixing the doorbell at his home. ■



3040 25th Street SE  
Salem, Oregon 97302-1125  
Telephone 503-378-4880  
Toll Free: 1-800-874-0102  
web: www.aviation.state.or.us  
Editor: Carolyn R. Bolton

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## Farewell to a Friend ...

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### **Oregon Aviation Community Mourns Loss of Jim Wright**

Jim Wright, a machinist and world record-holding pilot from Cottage Grove, Oregon, died on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2003 when his Hughes H-1B airplane, a replica of the original record-breaking plane built by Howard Hughes, crashed in Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming. Jim was a resident of Cottage Grove, a tenant of the Cottage Grove State Airport, and owned Wright Machine Tool.

As owner of his own machine shop, Jim was deeply involved in the construction of the H-1B. His dream of many years had been to build this airplane. With his mechanical, engineering, and piloting background, Jim was well versed in the H-1's powerful engine and his engineering experience as a successful machine tool manufacturer provided keen insight into what would be required to reproduce the H-1. Jim and his team spent four years and over 35,000 man hours building the H-1B. On July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2002, Jim Wright flew his H-1B for the first time above the skies of Cottage Grove. On the morning of September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2002, Jim Wright piloted the Hughes Racer Reproduction to a new world speed record (category C-1.d) of 304.07 mph at the Reno Air Races. The H-1B original is on display at the Air & Space Museum at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C.

The loss of Jim Wright is a tremendous blow to the aviation community. Jim was a tireless promoter of aviation, and his passion for aircraft - particularly the H-1 Racer - was valued by all those who knew him. The Oregon Department of Aviation extends its condolences to the Wright family, their friends, and the H-1 Team. ■