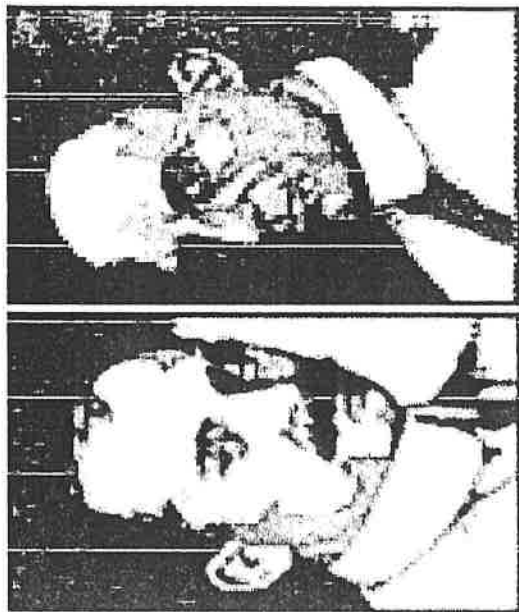




Orville Wright

Born August 19, 1871 - Died January 30, 1948

Flying- Machine

Patent No. 821,393

Inducted 1975

Wilbur Wright

Born April 16, 1867 - Died May 30, 1912

Flying-Machine

Orville and Wilbur Wright, American inventors and aviation pioneers, achieved the first powered, sustained, and controlled flight of an airplane. Wilbur was born in Millville, Indiana; Orville in Dayton, Ohio. They were the sons of a bishop of the Evangelical United Brethren Church. Both completed high school courses, but neither graduated formally. In 1893 the brothers opened a shop for the sale, repair, and manufacture of bicycles. Income from the shop supported them during the early years of their aeronautical experiments. Wilbur first became interested in the idea of mechanical flight after reading of Otto Lilienthal's successful gliding experiments in Germany. From these studies and observations, the Wrights built their first machine in 1899. It was a biplane kite which they fitted with wings that could be mechanically twisted. Before attempting a powered flight, they decided to master gliding and built three biplane gliders, which they flew at Kitty Hawk and Kill Devil Hills on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. They completed their first powered flight, the Kitty Hawk, in 1903, and made history's first powered, sustained and controlled airplane flights from level ground without any assistance at takeoff on the morning of December 17, 1903. In 1908 they were able to conclude an agreement for production of the Wright airplane for the U.S. Army. Wilbur made the first public flight on August 8, 1908 in France and continued his exhibition flights there to the end of that year. Both the brothers died bachelors; aviation had been their only passion.