

The History of Aviation

1500–present



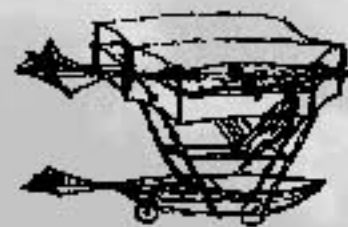
Leonardo da Vinci
early design of flight



Montgolfier Balloon
first powered flight



early flying machines



Cayley Glider
first heavier-than-air flight



Wright Flyer
first powered, sustained flight



Wright Flyer III
first military plane



Benoist Typo XIV
first passenger aircraft



Manfred von Richthofen
the "Red Baron"



Ryan NYP Spirit of St. Louis
first solo transatlantic flight



Fokker F2
first non-stop transatlantic flight



Lockheed Vega 5B Winnie Mae
first solo flight around the world



Heinkel He 176V1
first rocket aircraft



Boeing B-20 Evola Gay
first plane to drop an atomic bomb in war



Convair XFY-1
first vertical takeoff and landing



Bell XS-1
first supersonic aircraft



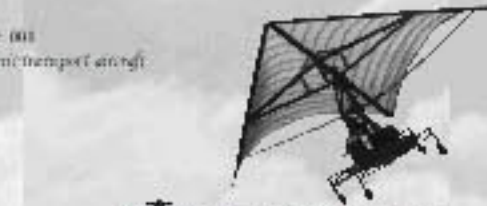
Lockheed U-2
the first "spy plane"



BOAC Comet
first commercial jet airline



Concorde 001
first supersonic transport aircraft



MiG-21
first electrically powered aircraft



Gossamer Penguin
first solar-powered aircraft



Lockheed P-47D
first death aircraft



Boeing 747
first flight of over 3000 people



Nordrop B-2 Spirit
most advanced aircraft in use

1900

1903 December 17
The world's first manned, sustained, controlled, powered flight in a heavier-than-air machine was achieved by Orville Wright at the controls of the Wright Flyer at Kill Devil Hill, Kitty Hawk, NC; took place at 10:35 a.m., lasted about 12 seconds and covered 120 feet.

1909 August 2
The U.S. Army formally accepted delivery of its first airplane, the Wright Flyer III, which had been used at July 1909. Unfortunately, the airplane was damaged in an accident on November 5.

1910

1914 January 1
The world's first scheduled airplane passenger service operated by an air mail company—the Aikman Line—began at 10:00 a.m. when Anthony James flew his first passenger from St. Petersburg to Tampa, FL. The aircraft was a two-seater Benoist Typo XIV flying boat of the Benoist Company. The fare for the 31-mile one-way flight was \$5 with a surcharge if the passenger weighed more than 200 pounds.

1918 April 21
Manfred von Richthofen, with 80 confirmed victories, the highest-scoring German fighter pilot of World War I, was killed during a dogfight over Soilly-le-Sec while flying his Fokker triplane.

1920

1923 May 3
USAAS Fokker V-3 pilot Lt. Oddy Kelly and John A. Macready completed the first nonstop flight across the United States in 26 hr., 30 min., 26.4 sec. The route they flew began at Roosevelt Field, Long Island, NY, and ended at Rockwell Field, San Diego, CA at 12:36 p.m. on May 3.

1927 May 20
Charles Lindbergh took off from Danvers Field, NY to become the first person to fly solo across the Atlantic and to establish a new long-distance record. His Ryan NYP was named Spirit of St. Louis in honor of the Minner's luncheon who backed his venture. The Ryan monoplane landed safely at Le Bourget, Paris after a flight of 33 hours, 59 minutes, 28 seconds. In all, Lindbergh covered a total of 5,500 miles at an average speed of 157 MPH.

1930

1933 July 15
Pioneer American woman Wiley Post set off from Floyd Bennett Field, NY on the first solo flight around the world in his Lockheed Vega 5B named Winnie Mae. He completed the feat by making the first nonstop flight to Seattle, arriving 25 hours 45 minutes after take-off. Post next flew over Mexico, Iceland, Siberia, Alaska, and Alaska, finally arriving back at New York just 7 days 18 hours 45 minutes after his journey began, despite his having suffered a broken propeller and damaged undercarriage en route. Total distance was 23,236 miles.

1939 August 27
The first flight of an aircraft powered by a turboprop engine took place in Germany at the Heinkel airfield. The flight of the Heinkel He 176V1 lasted for a brief but successful trip around the field and was aborted when the plane sputtered in shut-downed the engine.

1940

1945 August 6
At 9:55 a.m., the first atomic bomb in use in war was dropped from the B-29 named Evola Gay piloted by Colonel Paul Tibbets.

1947 October 14
The first Bell XS-1 piloted by USAF Major Charles "Chuck" Yeager became the first aircraft to pass through the speed of sound after being dropped from the belly of a B-29 at 10,300 ft. From a height of 30,000 feet, Yeager slowly began to increase speed in March 1946, about 700 MPH at 43,000 feet. He then returned to earth at the end of a 14-minute flight.

1950

1952 May 2
The world's first regularly scheduled, free-plying, jet airline opened with a BOAC Comet flight from London to Johannesburg, 14 hours at 3:15 p.m. when Captain A.M. Morgan took off with Comet 1 G-ALPH and 36 passengers for a 23-hour, 36-minute flight with a short stop at Rome.

1954 August 1
The US Navy Vertical Takeoff and Landing (VTOL) fighter commander from Corsair designated XV-8 made its first free vertical takeoff and landing. This unusual aircraft was in a vertical position on its tail skid with a short, 16-foot wingspan, 38 feet in length, with a near-elliptical wing of 27 feet 6 inches span, one forward and one dorsal fin with a total height of 25 feet 11 inches and two three-blade contra-rotating propellers.

1960

1960 May 1
A woman of 27 U-2 spyplane fighter the CIA, Francis Gary Powers was shot down over Sweden in his U-2. Powers ejected from his plane was damaged by a salvo of SA-2 missiles—but not before releasing a "mole" down" system to destroy sensitive equipment. Powers was an avid pilot and spent five years in prison before being returned to the United States in 1962.

1967 December 11
The first prototype Concorde 001 supersonic transport aircraft was rolled out at Toulouse, France. With a wingspan of 64 feet and a length of 170 feet, it was developed jointly by Sud Aviation in England and SNCMA in France. The aircraft had capacity for up to 38 passengers in high-density seating.

1970

1973 October 21
The world's first electrically powered aircraft made its first flight in Austria. Named the MiG-21, it was developed from a program put together by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency and the USAF. The first P-47D, converted to passenger mode with very high-density seating for 700, supported 1,000 people on board for a flight from Alaska to Israel.

1979 August 7
The solar-powered Gossamer Penguin made its successful flight for a distance of two miles at Edwards AFB, California. Piloted by glider pilot James Brown, it was designed and built by Dr. Paul MacCready.

1980

1981 June 15
The production series Lockheed P-47D made its first flight from a special facility at the Nevada desert. It was developed from a program put together by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency and the USAF. The first P-47D, converted to passenger mode with very high-density seating for 700, supported 1,000 people on board for a flight from Alaska to Israel.

1989 July 17
The prototype Nordrop B-2A made its first flight from Edwards AFB, California. The most sophisticated aircraft in use, the B-2 Spirit was designed with a maximum speed of 600 MPH at 50,000 feet and the ability to emit a very low radar signature.

1990

1991 May 24
For the first time in the history of aviation, more than 1,000 people were lifted into the air at the same time by the same aircraft. In an ad for Global Crossing Airlines, an El Al Boeing 747-300CRJ, converted to passenger mode with very high-density seating for 700, supported 1,000 people on board for a flight from Alaska to Israel. The aircraft had been modified to accommodate a very large number of passengers and support the evacuation of 14,000 Ethiopian Jews from Alaska, Alaska.

prehistory 1500–1899

1470(2)–1519
Leonardo da Vinci, one of the great Renaissance men, designed several flying devices, most of which being a series of contraptions, including a man-carrying flying machine that resembled a work by the wing-tapping up and down like a bird. These ideas were never to be realized, but the Leonardo really built a flying machine.

1783 November 21
Francis Pilatre de Rozier and the Montgolfier brothers made the first successful balloon flight, becoming the first pilot and passenger to make a journey by air. The balloon, one of two high and 70 feet in diameter, was filled with hydrogen gas and rose at the ground from Montgolfier's balloon for a 20-minute flight.

1849
The first man to fly a heavier-than-air machine was a flying machine that was made of bamboo, with a rubber band for a motor and a tail fin. It was designed and built by George Cayley in Eastbury, England. The glider was launched from the roof of a suspended by people running down it. When the glider passed over the head of the runner, the rope automatically released from a hook on the roof. Flight of only a few yards was achieved.