

THE CRADLE OF AVIATION MUSEUM'S STORY OF FLIGHT

Since the beginning of recorded history, humans have pursued the dream of flight. Over the course of decades, experimenters, some of them Long Islanders, solved the basic problems of an aircraft's shape, source of propulsion and means of control.

up to 1903

Balloons drift with the wind.

October 1873

Washington H. Donaldson takes off in his Daily Graphic balloon from Brooklyn in an attempt to make the first transatlantic crossing. A storm forced him down over Connecticut.



Kites and gliders helped us discover and understand the principles of flight.



1896 - William Randolph Hearst of Sands Point buys a Lilienthal glider in Germany and has it flown from the bluffs near his estate

Airships can be steered.

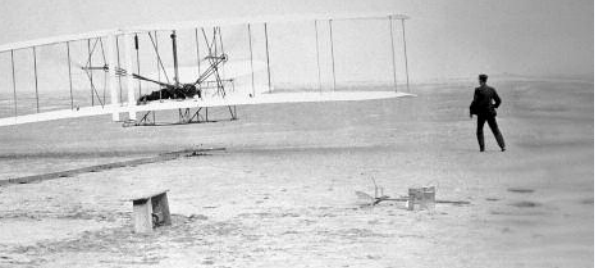
October 1902

Long Island is the site of America's first powered flights when Leo Stevens and Edward Boice fly gasoline powered airships from Coney Island.



A dream comes true.

On December 17, 1903, Wilbur and Orville Wright became the first to make a controlled and sustained flight in a power-driven, heavier-than-air craft.



I am convinced that human flight is both possible and practical.
~ Wilbur Wright, 1899

1904-1913

The first decade of flight after Kitty Hawk in many ways remains the most dramatic of all as brave men and women took to the air in shockingly fragile machines. By 1909 the first daring flights were made from the central area of Nassau County, then known as the Hempstead Plains. Because the flat, open landscape made a natural airfield close to New York, the earliest aviators were drawn to the place. Thus aviation was first introduced to this area where it would remain the focus of intense activity for the next 50 years.

1909 - First successful flights on Long Island by Glenn Curtiss in his Golden Flyer



1911 - Harriett Quimby learns to fly at Mineola and becomes the first licensed female pilot in the United States.

In my opinion there is no reason why the aeroplane should not open up a fruitful occupation for women.

~ Harriet Quimby, 1912



1914-1918

The airplane becomes a weapon.

During WWI, Long Island became home to some of the largest and most important military flying fields in America. The training of hundreds of military aviators would shape Long Island's aviation landscape for many years to come. The huge demand for military aircraft also made Long Island a significant center of aviation testing and production.

World War One



July 1918

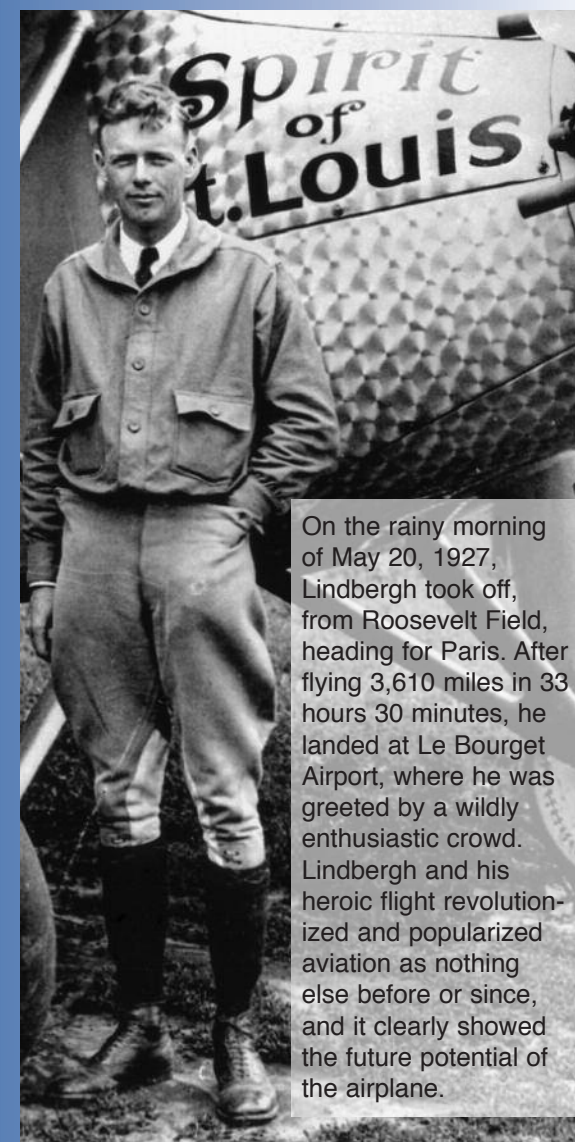
Mitchel Field is named in honor of former New York City mayor John Purroy Mitchel who was killed while training for the air service in Louisiana.



1919-1938

The "Golden Age" of aviation - two magnificent decades when flying truly came of age. Enormous technological progress was made that saw aviation go from being a dangerous sport to a prominent commercial business. During this colorful era, Long Island became the center of the flying world and its people contributed to the advance of aviation in every way possible.

The Golden Age



On the rainy morning of May 20, 1927, Lindbergh took off, from Roosevelt Field, heading for Paris. After flying 3,610 miles in 33 hours 30 minutes, he landed at Le Bourget Airport, where he was greeted by a wildly enthusiastic crowd. Lindbergh and his heroic flight revolutionized and popularized aviation as nothing else before or since, and it clearly showed the future potential of the airplane.

The life of an aviator seemed to me ideal. It involved skill. It brought adventure. It made use of the latest developments of science. There were times in an aeroplane when it seemed I had escaped mortality to look down on earth like a God.
~ Charles A. Lindbergh, 1927

1939-1945

During WWII Long Island was a crucial center of military aircraft production. These aircraft, produced in huge numbers for the Army, Navy and foreign governments, were of superior quality and had a major impact on the course of the war in all theatres. Local residents provided the manpower necessary for this massive production, and women and minorities were integrated into the workforce in large numbers for the first time. The war also had an impact on Long Island in terms of a large military presence, civilian defense and the conditions the war imposed at home.

World War Two



Rosie the Riveter; while American men were being shipped to the front lines in the 1940s, American women were moving to the factory lines.

1946-present

The jet engine not only revolutionized military aviation but it also changed the very way we view our world, as jetliners have greatly reduced the size of the globe.

Since WWII there has been an unprecedented revolution in aircraft design and performance. As aircraft speeds increased dramatically, conventional shapes - such as straight winged aircraft - now became obsolete and new swept wing designs were required. In the 1960s the introduction of wide-body jetliners, supersonic transports and quieter, more powerful and more efficient turbofans led to dramatic changes in commercial aviation. Similarly, the introduction of the helicopter turbine engine led to the helicopter finally becoming a versatile, practical machine.

The Jet Age



At 1540 mph, Grumman's F-14 Tomcat is the fastest airplane ever built on Long Island.



British Airways, Boeing 747-400

By the year 2002 roughly one out of every six people on Earth had flown. Many of them have at one time passed through one of the major airports on Long Island, among the busiest in the world. Long Island is also home to the busiest air traffic control center in the world.

Air traffic controllers at the TRACON in Westbury guide two million departures and arrivals at New York area airports each year.



JFK International Airport's Terminal 4 is a model for air terminal technology for the 21st century.



Aviation Today



Space exploration has been, and remains, humanity's greatest adventure - a bold leap into the darkness beyond Earth's protective atmosphere;

a daring break with the bonds of gravity that tie us to the planet. This fantastic adventure has unfolded entirely in our own time, with Sputnik, Apollo and the Space Shuttle.

These advancements were wrapped into a mere quarter century and Long Islanders have played central roles throughout.

Space Exploration



That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.
~ Neil Armstrong