

coaching and fire the AR-15 rifle on the 200

yard range.

The event will be held on 20 April at the Bell City Rifle Club, 1174 Mt. Vernon Rd., Southington and run from 0830 to 1400. Participants must be accompanied by a parent or guardian and must enter in advance. For information, call one of the following:

Brad Palmer	860-649-4446
Howard Plude	860-673-8890
Randy Bieler	203-272-1725

Maj Bourque talked to cadets about a SAREX to be held on March 30th. Cadets who are attending must arrive at the squadron at 0630 hours.

SENIOR MEETING

26 March, 2013

Squadron officers worked on fulfilling training requirements for the CTWG SAREX on 30 March

GOES ANTENNA MOUNT INSTALLED

The mount for the Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite was installed on Tuesday. The mount consists of two ton concrete base and a vertical pole. A 7.5 foot satellite reflector will be mounted on the pole.



The Squadron is grateful to Mr. Jack Santo of Santo Concrete for casting the base, digging the hole, and dropping the base into the hole.

AEROSPACE CURRENT EVENTS

Commercial Capsule Returns ISS Cargo to Earth

Space Explorations Technology Corporation, SpaceX, run by Eldon Musk, the co-founder of PayPal, scored another success when it returned over 2,500 pounds of cargo from the International Space Station.

The cargo consisted of science experiments, old space station equipment and 13 sets of Lego blocks used by the ISS crews to run science demonstrations for children.

The Dragon capsule is the only supply ship capable of delivery and return. Russian, Japanese, and European vehicles are capable of delivery but are destroyed upon re-entry. SpaceX has a 1.6 billion dollar contract with NASA and will run a dozen resupply missions.

Orbital Sciences Corporation will seek to compete with SpaceX. They plan to flight test their Antares rocket in April.

AEROSPACE HISTORY

Wright Brother's "First Flight" Challenged Again

The claim that the Wright Brother's were first to fly has been challenged numerous times. Samuel Pierpoint Langley's Aerodrome is the most notable example. Langley was Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution and attempted a series of tests, sponsored by the US Army, launching off a houseboat on the Potomac River. For years, the Smithsonian held that he was "first to fly" and so enraged the Wrights that they gave their Flyer to the London Science Museum and it was not returned to the Smithsonian, where it is now on display until 1948 and the following agreement had been made with the Smithsonian:

"Neither the Smithsonian Institution or its successors, nor any museum or other agency, bureau or facilities administered for the United States of America by the Smithsonian Institution or its successors shall publish or permit to be displayed a statement or label in connection with or in respect of any aircraft model or design of earlier date than the Wright Aeroplane of 1903, claiming in effect that such aircraft was capable of carrying a man under its own power in controlled flight."

Whitehead adherents claim that this agreement impugns the credibility of The Smithsonian and any of its agents when they render judgements on the Whitehead claim.

There have many claimants to the honor of being "first in flight" and some caution must be observed when understanding what this phrase means. For our purposes, it will mean "first to fly a heavier than air, self propelled, man carrying machine in controlled flight for a reasonable distance and duration." This eliminates gliders and lighter than air craft, all of which carried men before the Wright flight in 1903. It also eliminates aircraft which from the impetus acquired at take-off get into the air but glide a short distance and return to earth.

There have been probably a dozen men who have claimed the honor but recently a note in the 100th edition of *Jane's All the World's Aircraft* challenged the Wright claim to priority by arguing that Bridgeport's Gustave Whitehead beat the Wrights by two years. Paul Jackson, the *Jane's* editor, leans on the materials collected in the website *Gustave Whitehead-Aviation Pioneer*.



Gustave Whitehead
(PD-US)

Andrew King, the director of the Connecticut Air and Space Center in Stratford, not to be confused

with the New England Air Museum in Windsor Locks, also is a Whitehead partisan. The claim that Whitehead flew his Model 21, the Condor, in Fairfield on August 14, 1901 is given a 90% probability of being true by King.

The strength of the Wright claims relies on a copious quantity of accepted documentation: letters, plans, and photographs which are all acceptable to historians. Whitehead's claim relies on some vague newspaper accounts and blurry and/or missing photographs, some of which have been lost.

Platt Technical High School teacher Andrew Kosch built and flew a replica of Whitehead's Condor in on December 7th, 1986. He made some 20 flights at Sikorsky Airport, the longest of which was 330 feet. He believes that Whitehead did fly.

The Kosch flight is reminiscent of the flight of the Langley Aerodrome in 1914. Glenn Curtis flew a modified Aerodrome in support of the Langley claim and as part of his attempt to break the Wright patent monopoly. Both the Aerodrome and Condor used more modern engines. The Aerodrome was also modified aerodynamically and the Condor's exact specifications are not fully known.



Langley's Aerodrome, on display at the Smithsonian A&S Museum, Udvar-Hazy Annex



A porported picture of Whitehead's Condor
(PD-US)

Anyway, after the Curtiss flight, the Smithsonian then placed the Aerodrome in the museum and billed it as the first heavier-than-air, manned, powered aircraft capable of flight. This incident is what so antagonized the Wrights and resulted in their conveyance of the Flyer to London, referred to in the first paragraph.

LtCol Carl Stidsen of our CTWG is a life-long student of aviation history and has been long dubious of the Whitehead story. His repudiation of the Whitehead claim follows in a letter which he wrote and which is reproduced next..

Stidsen's Letter on Whitehead

The following letter was sent by Carl Stidsen to the Manchester Journal-Inquirer on November 17th, 1999. Stidsen was responding to the newspaper's November 10th, 1999 article entitled "First Flight in Stratford?" The letter is presented in its entirety with only minor editing and formatting changes.

Every couple of years the fable of "Gustave Whitehead - unknown Aviation Pioneer" surfaces, usually led by the same group of people down in the Fairfield area. And each time, they try a slightly different tack to try to breath some life into a story that has no basis in fact , aside from some affidavits filed 34 years afterward . This time it is a "documentary" film on his supposed 1901 achievement.

I have been studying Aviation history for over 45 years , and have followed the Whitehead claims since 1980. I am surprised that a newspaper of your stature has repeated the old saw about Whitehead and his alleged flights , but I guess it's a local news item.

The article glosses over most of inconsistencies that have led most Aviation Historians to disbelieve the Whitehead claims. But some of the statements in the article do need to be clarified or corrected:

1. That a replica of the airplane was flown in 1986.

The "Replica" that was referred to had two (2) modern gasoline-powered Engines, of 20 H.P. each . Each engine in the " Replica" turned a modern design wood propeller. Whitehead claimed to have a single 40 H.P. kerosene-powered engine controlling two propellers of totally different design, shape and size through some sort of a central transmission assembly. Further, the 1986 "Replica" had a modern tricycle landing gear - totally different from the four wheel , tandem arrangement, powered wheels of the 1901 / 1902 machines. And even with all those major changes , and with a highly experienced pilot aboard (Remember Whitehead was supposedly "flying" for the first time) , the best that the pilot in the 1986 tests could manage, and after numerous tethered tow tests, was about 330 feet - in a straight line , during the daytime, on a paved runway. By comparison, the 1901 / 1902 trials claimed to have flown 1/2 mile, 2 miles ,and 7 miles respectively !

The power transmission gearbox is central to Whitehead's machine . The gearbox was supposedly able to allow for switching from powering the front wheels wheels to powering the propellers ! And once off the ground , Whitehead supposedly controlled yaw (movement of the nose left or right) by using that same gearbox to change the speeds of each of the two propellers, using his single engine . Today - with all the lessons of nearly 100 years of powered flight , Whitehead's supporters both here and in Germany still cannot duplicate the supposed power transfer gear system of the 1901 machine , and make the thing work. Nor have they duplicated his engine . Even the 1901 aircraft design itself strongly resembles that earlier experimenter (D'Esterno, 1864), a drawing of which is referenced in O'Dwyer's work (P.92)

That makes Whitehead - whose formal education ceased at 13 - either a Genius or a Charlatan. I've been following the case since 1980, and incline toward the latter appellation.

Insofar as the "Flight " itself, the Whitehead

claims made are rather inflated , if you read closely. According to the standard work on Whitehead (William J. O'Dwyer , "History By Contract" , Leutershausen, 1978) the August 14, 1901 "flight" was actually a gliding flight , and the Whitehead machine was pulled into the air by three men using ropes (per affidavit of Cecii Steeves, P.49) Further , the distance in the affidavit (700 feet) doesn't match the Newspaper articles of 1901 (1/2 mile).

For his January ,1902 trials, Whitehead claims to have taken off from the Bridgeport area at 2:00 in the morning , and "flown" out over Long Island Sound (with no cockpit instruments to speak of) , first for over 2 miles , maneuvering so as to return to roughly the same point, and landing in the water. Then, after retrieval ,the "mostly steel and aluminum" craft was launched on another "flight" for seven miles , again landing in the water that same evening ! Those two "Flights" - if true - would have set records for :

- (1) the first powered, controlled flight
- (2) the first night flight.
- (3) The first flight in a circle.
- (4) The first Cross-Country flight (day or night)
- (4) The first flight greater than one Kilometer, etc.
- (6) The first flight greater than one mile, etc.
- (7) The first overwater flight
- (5) The first flight to land on the water.
- (6) The first amphibious flight .(take off from land, land on water)
- (7) The first aircraft with Retractable gear (ever tried to land in the water with the gear down?)

The above records were not set by real aircraft until up to a decade later - before reliable witnesses, in real time (not just claimed by affidavits from neighbors 35 years later.)

2. that "...if these guys let go, the machine will take off." That is not surprising , given the wing area ,and the weight of the "Replica" shown. Even a barn door can lift off the ground if the wind is strong enough, but that doesn't make a barn door an airplane. The Wright Brothers initially flew their 1900,1901 and 1902 gliders as kites , before testing them as gliders , as did Otto Lilienthal in 1894-96 (from whose gliders Whitehead derived his wing shape) and other

earlier experimenters . The question is not one of lift - but of reliable power and control of the aircraft once it is in the air . The 1903 Wright Flyer had both power and control. The Whitehead 1901/1902 machines had neither .

The picture in the Journal Inquirer shows the Whitehead machine with its wings spread , which is not the way that Whitehead supposed launched his Machine. Here is - in Whitehead's own words - how he supposedly took off :

"In order to start flying, the motor is set in motion and then connected to the front wheels which drive the machine forward. ...When ready to go up, a spring is released which stretches the wings and the propellers are started by means of a lever which stops the ground wheels and turns the power into the propellers" , (Stella Randolph, "Lost Flights of Gustave Whitehead", Washington D. C., 1937, P.15).

That same text also notes that "Not even Mrs. Whitehead recalls ever having seen her husband fly, although she was sufficiently interested in his work to help him sew the wings of his flying machine" (P.49) .

3. That Leutershausen (Whitehead's home town) "...contains many of his early model planes and inventions." Yet Whitehead emigrated from Germany to Brazil in 1887 , when he was only 13 years old ! That must be some town - did it save every "invention" made by 13 year old orphans who left town and never returned ?

4. That a contract prevents the (National Air and Space) Museum from displaying "any aircraft model or design of earlier date that the Wright Aeroplane of 1903". Wrong ! The NASM presently has both the Langley (Flying) model of 1896, a Chanute Hang glider of 1900 , and a Lilienthal hang glider of 1896 in their "early flight" display. Further, The full size 1903 Langley Aerodrome which attempted flight , but crashed twice (in October and December , 1903) has been restored and is also

in the NASM Collection. All these aircraft predate the Wright 1903 Flyer, and all are on display.

The most damning evidence against Whitehead's supposed claims lies in the judgement of his contemporaries - i.e. those who were active in aeronautics during the period 1890-1910. Whitehead - for whatever reason - was unable to duplicate his supposed "flights" before contemporary, disinterested witnesses other than local neighbors. We do know that later abandoned his (supposedly very successful) 1901 design in favor of an (unpowered) triplane hang glider design! Why would he take such a retrograde step?

Whitehead apparently had a lack of credibility among his peers. Perhaps it started with his claim to an even earlier flight in 1899, in Pittsburgh, PA. That "flight" supposedly saw him and another man in a charcoal-fueled, steam-powered aircraft "flying" for 1/2 mile, then crashing into a three story building. (Randolph, P. 29), Not surprisingly, no written reports/articles of that particular...uh..."flight" have surfaced anywhere in the print media.

During the Wright-Curtiss Patent litigation battles (1910-1917) Glen Curtiss introduced the efforts of numerous aviation pioneers into the record in an effort to invalidate the 1906 Wright Patent on aircraft control. However, Curtiss did not bother to include Whitehead's supposed claims into the Trial record. That in itself speaks volumes - If the Wright's bitterest contemporary critic didn't believe the Whitehead claims enough to use them against the Wrights in a landmark legal case while Whitehead was still alive, and all his (supposedly since lost) records were still intact, why should we believe those claims 80+ years later?

Readers interested in the White evidence are referred to the Whitehead web-site noted earlier.

Could These Documents Reignite the Civil War?

In 1968, Connecticut Governor John Dempsey issued a proclamation reproduced below. The

proclamation recognized Whitehead as "the Father of Aviation in Connecticut" and suggested the probability that Whitehead flew before the Wrights! This proclamation is reproduced below.



By His Excellency JOHN DEMPSEY, Governor: an

Official Statement

GUSTAVE WHITEHEAD DAY
AUGUST 14, 1968

Deserving of continuing recognition for his outstanding contribution to the early development of the aircraft industry in the United States is Gustave Whitehead, a native of Germany who came to this country as a young man and lived for many years in Bridgeport and Fairfield.

Gustave Whitehead's experiments with the design and building of aircraft took place in the early decades of this century, along with those of the Wright brothers and other pioneers in the field of aeronautics.

It is possible that he flew a plane of his own design as early as 1901. Research is underway to substantiate this claim and to assure Gustave Whitehead his proper place in aviation history.

His accomplishments, until recent years, were largely unrecognized. However, the Connecticut Aeronautical Historical Association, and others interested in the career of this dedicated inventor, who died in 1927, have helped to bring his commendable work to public attention.

Gustave Whitehead conducted his experiments with engines and aeronautical design in the Bridgeport - Stratford - Fairfield area. During the month of August, 1968, the Fairfield Historical Society is coordinating a display of the research findings related to Whitehead's long record of achievement.

In tribute to Gustave Whitehead, known as The Father of Aviation in Connecticut, I designate August 14, 1968, as GUSTAVE WHITEHEAD DAY, and I urge our citizens to take note of this occasion.

A handwritten signature of John Dempsey, Governor of Connecticut, written in black ink.

The Tarheels of North Carolina took umbrage with this declaration by the Nutmeg Governor and 23 years later countered with a resolution issued by their General Assembly. Their resolution is reproduced next.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH
CAROLINA

1985 SESSION

RATIFIED BILL

RESOLUTION 57

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1296

A JOINT RESOLUTION REPUDIATING THE CLAIM THAT THE WRIGHT BROTHERS DID NOT MAKE THE FIRST FLIGHT AND EXPRESSING NORTH CAROLINA'S PRIDE IN THE HISTORIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE WRIGHT BROTHERS.

Whereas, it is a wind-swept stretch of sand at Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina. It is aviation's mecca. It is where the Wright Brothers made the first successful, sustained, controlled flight in a heavier than air, powered machine on December 17, 1903. It is ground over which every pilot, aviation enthusiast, North Carolinian and American should walk; and

Whereas, each year many people who visit say that they experience a special sense of spirit when they silently walk the distance of the Wright's first flight and contemplate the enthusiasm and dedication of the Brothers in overcoming the enormous difficulties of designing an airplane and learning to fly; and

Whereas, there are so few historical sites in aviation that have been preserved for following generations. It was not happenstance that the location of mankind's first successful powered flight remains open to the public. It was the direct result of a group of individuals who in 1926 joined together to form what is now the First Flight Society; and

Whereas, Orville and Wilbur Wright, after their historic achievement on the morning of December 17, 1903, continued their experiments and flights in the United States, England, France and Germany for all to see and witness; and

Whereas, they left a legacy of formulas, designs, calculations and innovative flight control systems that remain in use today; and

Whereas, North Carolina, is where aviation began. It is hallowed ground. The events and accomplishments that occurred have been

recorded through eighty-three years of aviation history. It is where man's first sustained, controlled, powered flight happened at 10:35 a.m. on December 17, 1903; and

Whereas, North Carolina is proud that Captain William Tate, Kitty Hawk Postmaster, was instrumental in getting the Wrights to choose the Outer Banks for their experiments starting in September 1900. North Carolina is also proud that the historic lift off with Orville Wright at the controls was photographed by John T. Daniels. There were five eyewitnesses of the first flight: John T. Daniels, W.S. Dough and A.D. Etheridge of the Kill Devil Hills Life Saving Station, W.C. Brinkley of Manteo and John Moore of Nags Head; and

Whereas, the North Carolina General Assembly repudiates the contention of a group of Connecticut residents and that State's Legislature, that Gustave Whitehead, a resident of Bridgeport, Connecticut, was the first man to achieve sustained, controlled flight in a heavier than air machine on August 14, 1901; and

Whereas, there is no historic fact, documentation, record or research to support the claim that Gustave Whitehead flew before the Wright Brothers. The Whitehead claim has been discounted by leading aviation historians and the world's largest aviation museum - The Smithsonian Institute; and

Whereas, Bridgeport is famous for another great showman, promoter and circus man, P. T. Barnum, who said, "There's a sucker born every minute."; and

Whereas, the North Carolina General Assembly gives no credence to the false claim that Gustave Whitehead was the first man to achieve flight in a sustained, controlled, powered flight; and

Whereas, the issue has been settled many times by respected investigators, historians and aviation authorities. Dr. John B. Crane, Harvard University, investigated and made a report on Gustave Whitehead's flights published in N. A. A. Magazine, December 1936. He stated the following conclusions:

(1) The evidence that Gustave Whitehead made any genuine, sustained, horizontal flights is inconclusive;

(2) The evidence that Gustave Whitehead made short momentum flights prior to 1904 is inconclusive; and

(3) The evidence that Gustave Whitehead made short momentum leap flights at different times between 1904 and 1908 is conclusive; and

Whereas, we request that the Smithsonian Institute make available the documented information gathered in those investigations; and

Whereas, the people of the State of North Carolina take great pride in the achievements of Wilbur and Orville Wright, and we would like to call the attention of all and sundry to the following points:

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

Section 1. (a) The Wright Brothers made the world's first successful powered, sustained and controlled flights in an airplane at Kill Devil Hill near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, on the morning of December 17, 1903.

(b) The Wright Brothers demonstrated unique genius as well as extraordinary courage and perseverance in the development of the world's first practical airplane. In so doing, they inspired the birth of world aviation.

(c) The Wright Brothers in these achievements have been affirmed by the President and the Congress of the United States, federal courts, scholars, museums and bright school children everywhere.

Sec. 2. George Bernard Shaw once remarked that society seems to move through three phases in considering a new invention. At first we refuse to admit that the thing has been accomplished. Next we decide that it was not so important after all. Finally, we seem compelled to prove that someone else did it first.

Sec. 3. This resolution is effective upon ratification.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified, this the 10th day of July, 1986.

The Carolina General Assembly get higher marks than the Connecticut Governor. The produce an argument for the priority of the Wrights whereas Governor Dempsey only directs attention to the plans of The Fairfield Historical Society to assemble a display of research findings about Whitehead. Dempsey is also somewhat presumptuous in crediting Whitehead with contributing to the “early development of the aircraft industry in the United States.” Even allowing that Whitehead did fly before the Wrights, there is no evidence that anything useful developed from his engine and aircraft efforts.

We also need to credit the Carolinians with calling upon Bridgeport's own showman P.T. Barnum as a foil in their duel with Dempsey. However, they did miss a neat rhetorical thrust, an *ad hominem* reference to Connecticut as the “Nutmeg State,” a reference to the supposed Yankee swindlers who carved realistic looking wooden nutmegs and sold them to naïve customers.

Recently, the Editor of *The Coastwatcher* was reading Honest Abe Lincoln's blog and ran across a pithy statement by the Rail Splitter himself. Lincoln said that you can believe anything which you read on the internet and as proof, he wrote that read the advice on the internet. The corollary to this undisputable remark is that “License plates don't lie” and with that we present the final argument for the Wright Brother's achievement.



Note that The Editor has endorsed this “aluminum clad” proof with his initials and that the glyph on the left side of the plate recognizes the Wright's bike building career.

