



Smithsonian

National Air and Space Museum

Wright Brothers Medal Presentation Scrapbook

2002

National Air and Space Museum Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Air and Space Museum Archives
Title:	Wright Brothers Medal Presentation Scrapbook
Identifier:	NASM.XXXX.0324
Date:	1909
Creator:	Aero Club of America
Extent:	0.31 Cubic feet ((1 flatbox))
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Aero Club of America, Gift, 1915, XXXX-0324, unknown

Restrictions

No restrictions on access

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

Wilbur Wright was born April 16, 1867, his brother Orville Wright on August 19, 1871. They, along with sister Katharine and brothers Reuchlin and Lorin, were raised near Millville, Indiana and in Dayton, Ohio by their mother, Susan Wright, and father, Milton Wright, bishop of the United Brethren Church. As young men, Wilbur and Orville launched a printing business and a bicycle shop. An interest in aeronautics, spurred by the accounts of the experiments of Otto Lillenthal, prompted Wilbur to request information on the subject from the Smithsonian Institution in 1899. In August of 1900, Wilbur built his first glider and that year and the next the brothers tested gliders at Kitty Hawk. The Wrights constructed a wind tunnel to gather accurate aeronautical data and, benefiting from this new information, another glider was built in 1902. In 1903, the brothers were ready to began construction of a powered craft. With the assistance of mechanic Charles Taylor, they added a 4-cylinder, 12-horsepower engine and propellers to the 1903 Flyer and it was sent to Kitty Hawk for testing. At 10:35 am, December 17, on Kill Devil Hill, Orville achieved a flight of 12 seconds--traveling a distance of 120 feet. By 1908 the Wrights were demonstrating their machines in Europe. The U.S. Army Signal Corps advertised for bids for a two-seat observation aircraft and in 1908 and 1909, the Wrights flew at official Army trials at Fort Myer, Virginia. (It was here that powered flight's first fatality occurred: the tragic death of Lieutenant Thomas Selfridge.) The Army was to purchase the Military Flyer (Signal Corps No. 1) for {dollar}30,000 in 1909. In that same year, The Wright Company was established to manufacture Wright aircraft. Wilbur died in Dayton, Ohio on May 30, 1912. Orville Wright would live until January 30, 1948.

Scope and Contents

This scrapbook is one of three prepared by the Aero Club of America in honor of the presentation of the Aero Club of America medals to Orville and Wilber Wright by President William Howard Taft. The book consist of photos, editorials, articles, and cartoons published on 16 June 1909, the day of the presentation, and given to the club for inclusion in the book. Also included are several copies of speeches made at the presentation as well as letters from ten governors and 13 scientific bodies.

General

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Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Aero Club of America Medal
- Aeronautics
- Aeronautics -- 1903-1916
- Aeronautics -- Awards

Types of Materials:

- Cartoons (humorous images)
- Clippings
- Photographs
- Scrapbooks
- Speeches

Names:

- Aero Club of America
- Taft, William H. (William Howard), 1857-1930
- Wright, Orville, 1871-1948
- Wright, Wilbur, 1867-1912