

North Carolina Aviation Facts and History*

- In 1873, the first documented airplane in America was built by Henry Gatling outside Murfreesboro.
- On Dec. 17, 1903, Orville Wright achieved the first powered, sustained, heavier-than-air flight at Kitty Hawk. The flight lasted 12 seconds and covered a distance of 120 feet.
- In 1907, Levi Paul, of Davis, became the first person in the world to get a helicopter to lift off the ground when his helicopter lifted 4 feet into the air.
- On May 14, 1908, the first passenger flight took place in a Wright plane at Kitty Hawk. Wilbur Wright was the pilot, and Charles Furnas was the passenger.
- In 1913, Tiny Broadwick, of Oxford, became the first woman to parachute from a plane.
- On May 2, 1928, a monument celebrating the first flight was unveiled at Kill Devil Hills.
- Gregory Peck's character in the World War II movie "Twelve O'Clock High" was based on the experience of Frank Armstrong Sr., of Hobgood.
- Steve McQueen's character in the World War II movie "The Great Escape" was based on the experiences of pilot John Dortch Lewis, of Goldsboro.
- The World War II movie "Memphis Belle" was based on the plane piloted by Robert Morgan, of Asheville.
- The character "Trapper John" in the TV show "M.A.S.H." was derived from the experiences of Dr. John Lyday, a former airman from Greensboro.
- North Carolina has 72 publicly owned airports and more than 300 privately owned airports.
- If the runways from the state's 72 airports were laid together end to end, they would equal a two-lane highway that stretches from Manteo to Murphy (about 610 miles).
- More than 56 million passengers fly in and out of the state each year.
- Commercial and general aviation has a \$31 billion annual economic impact for the state.
- Commercial and general aviation accounts for about 123,400 jobs in North Carolina.
- North Carolina has nearly 14,000 certified pilots and instructors and more than 7,000 registered aircraft.
- Commercial and general aviation accounts for about 88,400 jobs in North Carolina.
- North Carolina has 13,993 certified pilots and instructors.
- 8,223 registered private, corporate and government aircraft are based in North Carolina.

**As of March 20, 2016*