District I—Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

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The Fairfield League of Yankee RCers made a visit to the Connecticut Air and Space Center. Behind them is a 1945 FG-1G Corsair being restored.

This first flight flying machine report was submitted by Associate Vice President (AVP) Andy Figlar.

Connecticut might be the third-smallest State of the Union, but it is a giant in the aircraft industry and in ground-breaking flight advancements. Two museums bring these facts from legend to reality. The first is located in Windsor Locks, Connecticut, at the New England Air Museum, where thousands of parts and complete airplanes reside in stately display for anyone to view in awe. The second is in Stratford, at the Connecticut Air and Space Center.

The unique resident of flight residing there is Gustave Whitehead's No. 21 Airship that most residents of New England believe is the very first airplane to fly. As Eugene Madera, president of the Air and Space Center said, "Everything that happened in aviation history, happened here in Connecticut." He was referring to Gustave's powered and manned controlled airplane flight on August 14, 1901.

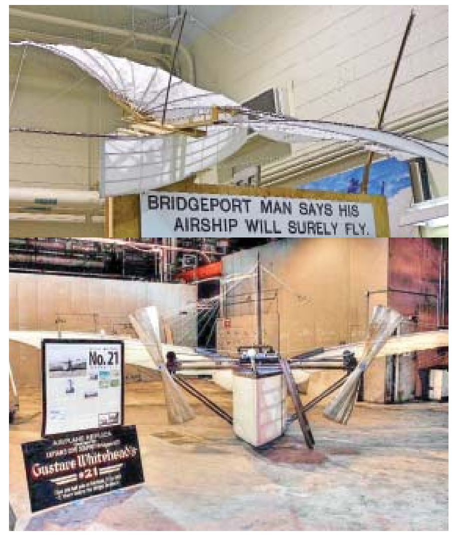
Two important books with pictures and other documentation have been written by Stella Randolph detailing eyewitness accounts and interviews that she did in 1937. They are *The Lost Flights of Gustave Whitehead* and *Before the Wrights Flew*. Both books are extremely rare.

My interest to be in the museum involved my cousins, Louis and Richard Remains. They wanted to learn more about their Hungarian grandfather, Louis Renkavinski, who helped Gustave Whitehead build the engines for the No. 21 Airship.

Curiosity led to a team of model airplane builders, shop teachers, and students to build a full-scale flying replica of the Whitehead airplane. Student Chris Harsco from Platt Technical School, advanced model builder Bill Wargi, and Platt teacher and pilot, Andy Kusch, built and successfully flew the Whitehead Replica in 1985.

In March 8, 2013, the world's foremost authority on aviation history, *Jane's All the World's Aircraft*, formally recognized Gustave Whitehead as first in powered flight and the State of Connecticut honored Whitehead's achievement with a bill signed by Governor Dannell Malloy.

The Connecticut Air and Space Center also features full-scale repair shops, a museum, lecture rooms, and aircraft memorabilia from the history of Sikorsky and the Aveco engine plant. It is currently are restoring an FG1-D Corsair, building the parts as needed. More than 6,000 Corsairs were turned out at the Aveco Plant during World War II, and later in the Korean War where the F4U-5N version flew. At the museum, full-scale airplane restorer Mark Corvine will be happy to give you, free of charge, a history of how the Corsair was built!"



Gustave Whitehouse flew his No. 21 Airship on August 14, 1901, before the Wright brothers flew!

(L) Richard Renkavinsky's father helped Whitehead build the engines for the No. 21 Airship. His cousin is AVP Andy Figlar (R).

Thanks Andy for this interesting report, which prompted me to google Gustave. It turns out that more than enough evidence and accounts of his flight have convinced the leading historians that Gustave Whitehead did indeed fly his aircraft before the Wright brothers. I found a video of Gustave's airplane (replica) in flight at https://youtu.be/Ucm80BYUXEE.

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