



Wilbur **WRIGHT**

Born in Millville, Indiana, Wilbur Wright, alongside his brother Orville, revolutionized the world with the invention of the first successful powered airplane. Though the famous 1903 flight took place in North Carolina, Wilbur's Indiana roots mark the state as a foundational part of aviation history. A meticulous thinker and brilliant engineer, Wilbur handled much of the conceptual design and testing of the Wright Flyer. His contributions laid the groundwork for modern aeronautics, and his legacy endures as one of aviation's true pioneers.



Harvey **COOK**

Harvey Weir Cook was a World War I flying ace from Wilkinson, Indiana, who became a national figure through his aerial exploits. After the war, he returned home and championed the development of aviation in the Midwest. He played a vital role in the establishment of what is now the Indianapolis International Airport, and the terminal was named in his honor. Cook later served as a pilot in World War II, where he was tragically killed in action. His contributions helped position Indiana as an important hub in American aviation.



Paul **BAER**

Paul Frank Baer, born in Fort Wayne, Indiana, was the United States' first combat flying ace in World War I. Credited with shooting down nine enemy aircraft, Baer became a symbol of American courage in the skies. He flew with the famed Lafayette Escadrille and later the U.S. Army Air Service. After the war, he continued flying in commercial aviation before dying in a crash in 1930. Baer's legacy as a fearless and skilled pilot paved the way for future military aviators and earned him a revered place in Indiana history.



Amelia **EARHART**

Though not born in Indiana, Amelia Earhart forged a deep connection with the state through her work at Purdue University. As a visiting faculty member and career counselor for women, she inspired countless students to pursue careers in aviation and engineering. Purdue supported her historic 1937 around-the-world flight attempt by providing funds and technical support. Earhart's pioneering spirit and advocacy for women in flight left an indelible mark on Indiana's educational and aviation legacy.



Willa **BROWN**

Willa Brown was a pioneering aviator, educator, and civil rights advocate who broke significant racial and gender barriers in American aviation. Raised in Terre Haute, Indiana, she attended Sarah Scott Middle School and Wiley High School before graduating in 1927 from Indiana State Normal School - now Indiana State University - with a teaching license. Although she began her career as an educator, Brown went on to become the first African American woman in the United States to earn a commercial pilot's license and mechanics license. As a leader at the Coffey School of Aeronautics, she helped train Black pilots, many of whom became Tuskegee Airmen during World War II. She successfully advocated for the inclusion of Black Americans in the Civilian Pilot Training Program, influencing federal policy and reshaping aviation opportunities nationwide.



Marty WYALL

Marty Wyall, from Liberty, Indiana, was among the last women to join the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) during World War II. These civilian women pilots ferried aircraft, towed targets, and supported military operations on the home front. Wyall not only served with distinction but later dedicated herself to preserving the history of the WASPs, becoming their unofficial historian and archivist. Thanks to her efforts, the WASPs received long-overdue recognition, including the Congressional Gold Medal awarded in 2010.



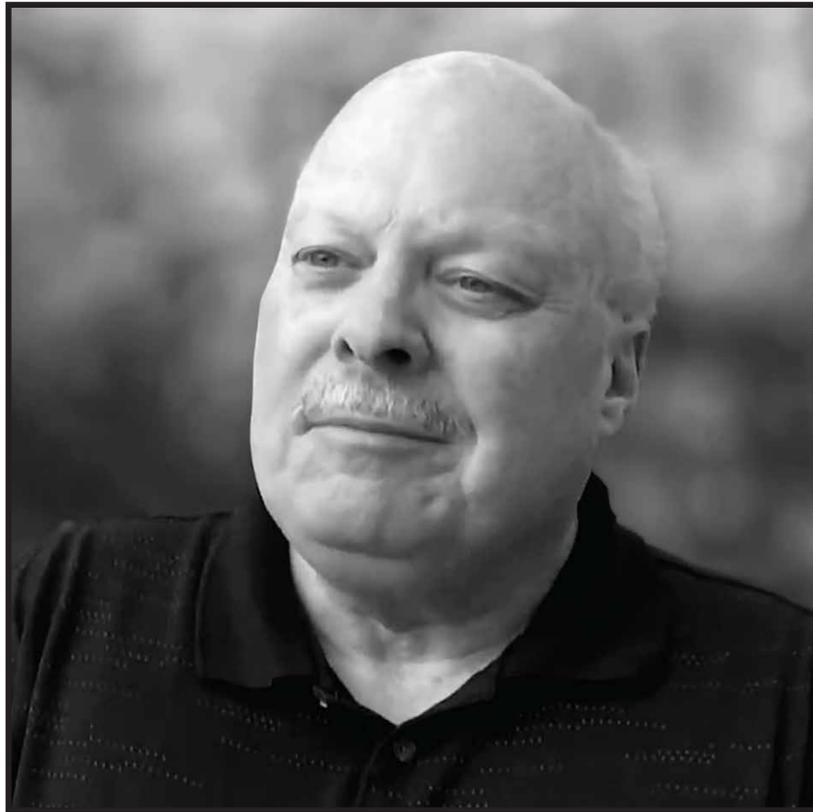
Charles **DEBOW**

Indianapolis-born Charles DeBow made history as one of the first five Black aviators to graduate from the Tuskegee Airmen's inaugural training class in 1942. DeBow flew combat missions in Europe during World War II and later became a prominent educator. His work helped break racial barriers in the U.S. military and set the stage for integration in the armed forces. His achievements, rooted in Indiana, reflect the courage and perseverance of the Tuskegee Airmen and the broader civil rights movement.



Lewis **JACKSON**

Lewis A. Jackson, born in Angola, Indiana, showed an early fascination with flight, building his own plane as a teenager. He later became Director of Training for the 99th Pursuit Squadron of the Tuskegee Airmen, where he helped train hundreds of Black pilots during World War II. A visionary leader and skilled aviator, Jackson combined technical expertise with a passion for education and equity. His career advanced not just aviation, but access and opportunity for underrepresented communities in flight and engineering.



Mark **CRITTENDEN**

Mark Crittenden is a retired air traffic control professional with over 30 years of experience in aviation safety and operations. Based in Indianapolis, he held leadership roles including Operations Manager and is widely known for playing a critical role on September 11, 2001, helping manage the emergency grounding of flights during the national crisis. Renowned for his calm under pressure and commitment to public safety, Crittenden has been featured in media reflecting on the 9/11 response and continues to share insights on leadership and crisis management in aviation.



David **WOLF**

Dr. David A. Wolf, a native of Indianapolis, Indiana, is a physician, engineer, and former NASA astronaut who has played a vital role in advancing human spaceflight and space medicine. A graduate of Purdue University and the Indiana University School of Medicine, he logged over 168 days in space across four missions, including a long-duration stay aboard the Russian Mir Space Station and multiple International Space Station assembly flights. Known for his pioneering work in microgravity tissue engineering and his development of the Space Bioreactor, Dr. Wolf holds numerous patents and NASA honors. He became the first American to vote from space and continues to represent Indiana's legacy of innovation and exploration. In recognition of his achievements, Indianapolis named the Astronaut David Wolf Bridge in his honor.



Robert **SHIPP**

Robert Shipp Jr. was a pioneering air traffic controller whose career helped shape aviation history in Indiana. After serving in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War, Shipp became one of the first African American controllers in the Federal Aviation Administration and, in 1968, the first African American controller at Hulman Field in Terre Haute. During his four years in Terre Haute, he ensured the safety of aircraft in the tower and rose to assistant tower chief, leaving a lasting legacy of excellence and trailblazing leadership in Indiana aviation.



Charles **TAYLOR**

Though born in Illinois, Charles E. Taylor's legacy is closely tied to Indiana through his pivotal role in launching the aviation careers of Indiana natives Wilbur and Orville Wright. As the master machinist in the Wright brothers' bicycle shop, Taylor designed and hand-built the lightweight aluminum engine that powered the historic 1903 flight, making controlled, powered aviation possible. His mechanical expertise, steady ingenuity, and hands-on problem solving were critical to transforming the Wrights' ideas into working aircraft, directly connecting Indiana's own pioneers to one of the greatest technological achievements in history. Recognized today as the first aviation mechanic, Taylor's craftsmanship helped secure Indiana's foundational place in the story of human flight.