Charles Lindbergh Biography

Charles Lindbergh was an aviator and pioneer par excellence. He was the first person in the world to complete the non stop transatlantic flight. Charles Lindbergh redefined the way aircrafts would conserve fuel. He also contributed immensely to combat strategy at low altitudes.

Charles Augustus Lindbergh was born on February 4, 1902, in Detroit, Michigan. Lindbergh’s lineage was extremely impressive. Charles Lindbergh’s father was a representative of the United States Congress. As a result of which Charles grew up in Little Falls, Minnesota. At an age where most children play with conventional toys, young Charles was enthralled by planes. As he grew older he became interested in the way they functioned.

Charles Lindbergh decided that he would fly a plane one day. He joined the University of Wisconsin in 1920. But after a point of time he could resist the allure of the blue sky no longer and quit engineering half way. He realized that the best place to get access to planes for a sustained period of time would be the United States Army. After flying the army planes he flew a mail plane between St. Louis, Missouri, and Chicago, Illinois.

Interest in airplanes was growing day by day. It had moved from something that only a select few could have access to something that was becoming more commonplace. In 1927, a contest was held for anyone who could make a non stop flight across the Atlantic Ocean. The prize was the princely sum of $25000. Lindbergh made the journey from New York to Paris in thirty three hours and thirty two minutes. It was the first time that it had ever been done. Charles Lindbergh’s plane was called The Spirit of St. Louis.

Charles Lindbergh was a superstar all over the world. He began touring different countries to share his incredible experience. In 1929, Charles Lindbergh married Anne Morrow, who was the daughter of the United States ambassador to Mexico. They had six children. Tragedy struck the Lindbergh home when the eldest child, Charles Augustus III was kidnapped. A manhunt was launched but the kidnappers murdered the toddler. The media went into frenzy during the event. An American hero was heartbroken, the Lindbergh’s moved to the United Kingdom. In Britain, Lindbergh primarily worked as an inventor.
After these events, Lindbergh began working for various companies. The organizations that he worked for include the United Aircraft Corporation, Pratt & Whitney Aircraft and Pan American Airways. His most innovative work was done for Pan American when he was involved in the development of transoceanic clippers and the flying boats.

But working in an extremely structured environment did not enthuse Lindbergh for long. He began frequenting the military naval bases. The military wanted him to test their new Corsairs and P-38s. He took part in combat routines, even shooting down a Japanese plane in the process. Charles Lindbergh was involved in training the new pilots and guiding the older ones. Sometimes challenged to an air duel, more often than not it was obvious that he was a class apart. Lindbergh rewrote the rules of low-altitude combat. In spite of his military leanings he was a public opponent of the war. This attitude ensured that he was denied an Army commission. He was recruited by none other than Henry Ford, ironically to build war planes.

In 1954, he added to another feather to his cap when he won the Pulitzer Prize for his book, The Spirit of St. Louis that recounted his flight across the Atlantic. Eisenhower made him Brigadier General that year. He worked for the creation of the Congressional Office of Technological Assessment. Lindbergh took up the social cause of the survival of that Tasaday tribe. He made a compilation of his essays that addressed the cost – benefit of modern technology. Lindberg pioneered the concept of preserving fuel while flying and the charting of polar air routes. The rules governing the air travel between continents today were written by Charles Lindbergh.

Charles Lindbergh died of cancer on August 26, 1974 on the Hawaiian island of Maui. The inscription on his tombstone quotes Psalms 139:9 "If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea."