Glenn Hammond Curtiss Encyclopedia Article

Glenn Hammond Curtiss

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Glenn Hammond Curtiss

1878-1930

American aviator and inventor who made the first public flights in the United States and designed several aircraft, including the flying boat and the seaplane. (A seaplane is designed to take off from or land on a body of water.) Glenn Hammond Curtiss was born in Hammondsport, New York, in 1878, his middle name being chosen in honor of his town's founder. Curtiss was thrilled by speed, experimenting with bicycles, motorcycles, and flying machines. His exploits even made him the model for a series of children's books entitled *The Adventures of Tom Swift.* Curtiss designed and built engines for aircraft, then tried them out in the air. In 1908, he won the *Scientific American* trophy after his successful flight of 0.6 miles (1 km). He was the first to build seaplanes in America, earning him the title "The Father of Naval Aviation." His planes were widely used by Great Britain, Russia, and the United States during World War I.