# Hanna Reitsch Encyclopedia Article

## Hanna Reitsch

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# Hanna Reitsch

**1913-1979**

German aviator who tested military aircraft. Reitsch learned to fly gliders because engine-powered airplanes were prohibited in post-World War I Germany. She participated in a 1934 South American expedition to determine how thermal conditions affect flight. Reitsch's first distance record was for soaring 100 miles. She also won a national competition. During World War II, Luftwaffe officers asked Reitsch to serve as a military test pilot. She demonstrated helicopters and was the first pilot to fly the rocket-propelled Messerschmitt 163.