Juan De La Cierva Encyclopedia Article

Juan De La Cierva

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Juan De La Cierva

1886-1936

Spanish aviator and aeronautical engineer who pioneered rotary flight. In 1918, after receiving his engineering degree, he built the first trimotor airplane in Spain. In 1923 he designed an aircraft called the *autogyro* that combined the capabilities of a conventional fixed wing aircraft and the rotary action of the helicopter. The autogyro was used in the United States during 1931-33. In 1936 design variations on the autogyro led to the construction of the first successful helicopter.