Otto Von Guericke Encyclopedia Article

Otto Von Guericke

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Otto Von Guericke

1602-1686

German physicist and engineer who invented the air pump, which he used to study how air was used in respiration and combustion. Guericke completed his university education with degrees in law, mathematics, and mechanics. In 1631, he was hired as an engineer in the army of Gustavus II Adolphus of Sweden. From 1646-1681, he served as mayor of Magdeburg. In 1650, Guericke invented the air pump, which revealed that air travels through a vacuum, while sound does not. Through several experiments, he also discovered the force exerted by air pressure. In 1663 he invented the first electrical generating machine, creating static electricity by briskly rubbing a revolving ball of sulfur.