

# James H. "Dutch" Kindelberger

May 8, 1895 - July 27, 1962

**James Kindelberger** was an American pioneer of aviation. He was also a leader of North American Aviation for a number of years. The International Aerospace Hall of Fame inducted Kindelberger in 1977.

Kindelberger was born in Wheeling, West Virginia, to German immigrants. His parents taught him the typical German virtues; he always believed in hard work, orderliness and punctuality. In World War I he was a member of the US Army Air Service.

North American Aviation was a major US aircraft manufacturer, responsible for a number of historic aircraft, including the T-6 Texan trainer, the P-51 Mustang fighter, the B-25 Mitchell bomber, the F-86 Sabre jet fighter, and the X-15 rocket plane, as well as Apollo Command and Service Module, the second stage of the Saturn V rocket, the Space Shuttle orbiter and the B-1 Lancer. Through a series of mergers and sales, North American Aviation is now part of Boeing.

Kindelberger became the president and general manager of North American Aviation in 1934. He was promoted to chairman and chief executive officer in 1948, with Lee Atwood replacing him as president. In 1960, Atwood took over as chief executive when Kindelberger retired. Kindelberger remained chairman of the board until his death in 1962. "Under his guidance, North American Aviation broke technological barriers; produced propeller- and jet-powered fighters and bombers, military trainers, rocket engines, and rocket-powered aircraft; and began its role as the prime contractor for the country's space program". Between the years 1935 and 1967, North American Aviation (under Kindelberger's direction) built more military aircraft than any other airplane maker in U.S. history. Kindelberger was recently honored in a documentary by filmmaker William Winship. "Pioneers in Aviation: The Race to the Moon", which profiles four of America's legendary aerospace pioneers --William Boeing, Donald Douglas, Dutch Kindelberger, and James McDonnell --whose achievements led the nation and the world from the era of open-cockpit biplanes to the very threshold of Space.

After World War II Atwood expected there would be a need for improved rocket engines based on those developed by the Germans for the V-2. The two decided in 1946 to invest \$1 million in a rocket engine test facility in Santa Susanna, California, and a supersonic wind tunnel at Los Angeles International Airport. This paid off when North American landed the contract to develop the Navaho, a rocket-boosted intercontinental cruise missile. Navaho allowed North American to develop expertise in rocket engines, inertial navigation systems, and supersonic aerodynamics. This in turn led to securing contracts for many advanced aerospace vehicles in the late 1950s - the X-15 manned hypersonic spaceplane, the Hound Dog missile, and the XB-70 Valkyrie triple-sonic bomber. The XB-70 required the company to develop new materials, welding, and manufacturing processes.

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