



Replica of George Taylor's glider of 1909

Cat. No. 0014

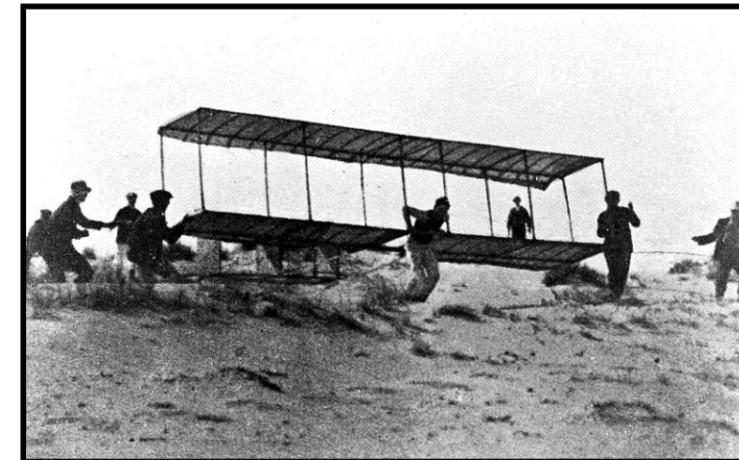


[Photograph – B. Duckworth]

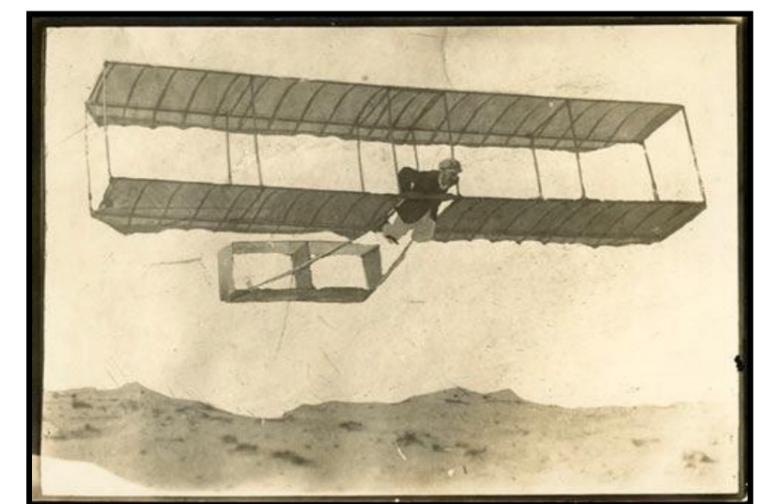
The Museum's exhibit is a full size replica of the Taylor Glider. It is one of three built by the Museum to mark the centenary of the first Australian heavier-than-air flight. The second is held by the National Museum of Australia, Canberra. The third is on loan to the Moorabbin Air Museum, Melbourne.

On 5th December 1909, George Taylor, Secretary of the Aerial League of Australia, made the first Australian man-carrying glider flight on the sand hills of Narrabeen beach, NSW. On that day about 100 spectators observed a total of twenty nine flights. Initially the glider was tethered using ropes attached to each wing tip; however, as the day progressed the guide ropes were released. A distance of 110 yards was recorded for George Taylor's first free flight. George Taylor, Charles Schultz and Edward Hallstrom all made successful flights. At least one flight was made by George's wife, Florence, who thus staked her claim for the first female flight in Australia. Another flight was made by Charles Schultz's wife Emma.

The Taylor glider was a 28 foot, cotton covered, wire braced biplane with a cord of 4 foot 6 inches, a box kite tail and an empty weight of 103 lbs. Control was carried out by movement of the pilot's body to achieve weight shift. A later version of the glider had a moveable canard mounted in front of the pilot. George Taylor had constant contact with one of Australia's aviation pioneers, Lawrence Hargrave and regularly paid tribute to Hargrave. The wire braced box kite wing construction can be directly attributed to the earlier work of Hargrave, who, on 12 November 1894, was credited with being lifted above the ground using a train of four box kites at Stanwell Park.



[Preparing for takeoff – Narrabeen, 1909; photograph from A. Ash collection]



[George Taylor flying his glider, 1909; photograph: National Library of Australia.]