

# *NAME THAT PLANE*

## **Curtiss pusher**

The 1911 Curtiss Model D (or frequently, "the Curtiss pusher") was an early United States aircraft of a pusher-prop design with the gasoline engine and propeller behind the pilot's seat. The basic aircraft model was among the very first aircraft in the world to be built in any quantity — all of which were produced during this trial and error era of explosive aircraft development and equally important parallel technical development in internal combustion engine technologies.

It was also the aircraft model that first took off from and landed on a ship — different United States Navy ships on separate days as it happened. It was based on aviation pioneer Glenn Curtiss' aileron using Curtiss Golden Flyer design of 1909, itself derived from his prize winning June Bug of 1908. The design evolved from having the control elevators in front of the pilot in the so called head, to the familiar one of most aircraft since with the elevators located along the tail (called the "Headless" variant) along with the rudder. Like all Curtiss designs, the aircraft utilized ailerons to control rolling in flight instead of the Wright brother's patented wing warping technology.

On 14 November 1910, Eugene Ely took off from the USS Birmingham in a Model D. This was the first time an aircraft had taken off from a ship. On 18 January 1911, Eugene Ely landed a Model D aboard the USS Pennsylvania. This was the first aircraft to land on a ship.

The Model D was a biplane fitted with a wheeled tricycle undercarriage. The construction was primarily of spruce, with ash used in parts of the engine bearers and undercarriage beams, with doped linen stretched over it. The outrigger beams were made of bamboo. Prevented by patents from using the Wright brothers' wing warping technique to provide lateral control, Curtiss used ailerons instead. In the end, this proved to be a superior solution. *(From Wikipedia)*

*The Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome has had a flyable reproduction Model D Curtiss pusher in their collection since 1976, and has been powered with a Hall-Scott V8 engine earlier in its weekend airshow appearances, and most recently has been powered with a Curtiss OX-5 V8 engine. See the photo here: [Curtiss pusher at Old Rhinebeck](#)*

### *Specifications (Model D Type IV)*

#### General characteristics

- \* Crew: one, pilot
- \* Capacity: 1 passenger
- \* Length: 29 ft 3 in
- \* Wingspan: 38 ft 3 in
- \* Height: 7 ft 10 in
- \* Empty weight: 700 lb
- \* Loaded weight: 1,300 lb
- \* Powerplant: 1 × Curtiss E-4 V8 engine, 60 hp

#### Performance

- \* Maximum speed: 50 mph (43 kn, 80 km/h)
- \* Endurance: 2.5 hours



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**Don Bush, EAA 172 Treasurer**  
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