



The Engines

The Wright Aeronautical Corporation produced air-cooled Whirlwind and Cyclone engines used in both military and commercial aircraft. The "Spirit of St. Louis," flown by Charles Lindbergh on the solo nonstop flight across the Atlantic Ocean was powered by a Wright Whirlwind, J-5 engine. Noted aviators Richard Byrd, Clarence Chamberlin and Amelia Earhart also used Wright engines in their record-breaking aircraft. The engines were also sold internationally, with many going to Britain and France.

"Over 50,000 tests were conducted per engine in the course of manufacture."



Wright's Training School class picture, featuring a nine cylinder whirlwind engine in the center.

During World War II, the mass-production of aircraft engines by Curtiss-Wright triggered a major expansion of the Paterson facilities. Wright engines powered many aircraft during World War II, including the Douglas SBD Dauntless, the B-17 Flying Fortress, the B-25 Mitchell and the B-29 Superfortress. Over the course of the war, over 77,500 engines were built in Paterson. The factory operated 24 hours, with three shifts of workers. After the Cyclone and Whirlwind engines were assembled in Paterson, they traveled to other factories around the country, to be attached to airplanes. Shortly after the war, with demand reduced, the Paterson factory was shut down, and the property was sold in 1947. The company continued to be a major employer of Patersonians into the 1950s, as many of the Paterson Plant workers decided to commute to the new facility in Wood-Ridge, NJ. The Wood-Ridge Plant closed in 1984.



Natalie Miller filled her husband's job in the propeller division while he served in WWII. She is one of many women to work at Wrights during the war, Paterson's own Rosie the Riveters, 1942.