

Sylvanus Albert Reed INVENTOR

from Ritchie Thomas

The International Cyclopedia of Aviation Biography manuscript was recently discovered in the Wright State University Library, Department of Archives and Special Collections. Produced in 1929, the ICAB was never published and languished in obscurity since then—probably another casualty of the Great Depression.

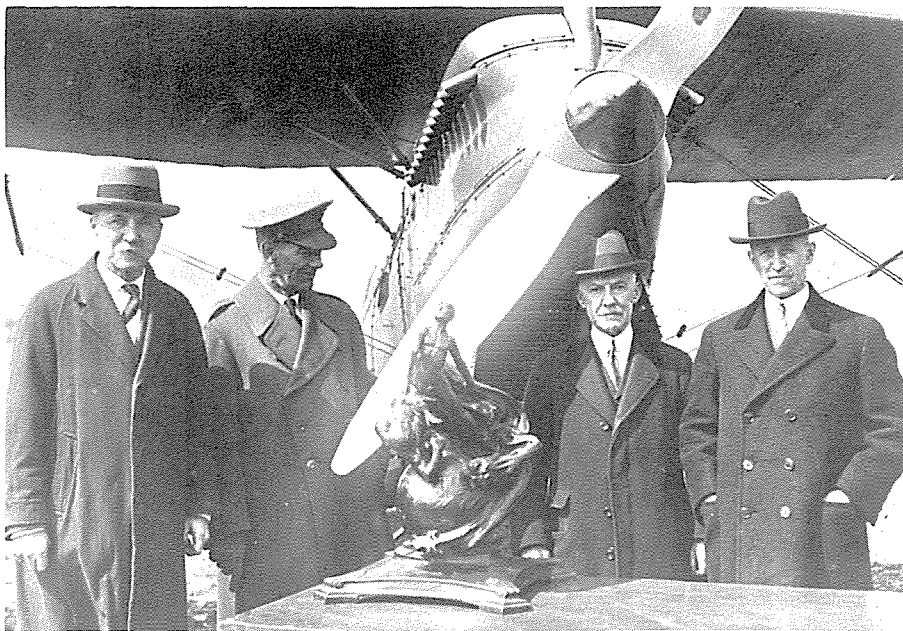
The following biography, of a little-known pioneer aviation inventor who influenced modern metal propeller design, is excerpted from the ICAB manuscript.

Reed, Sylvanus Albert—engineer and inventor, was born in Albany, N.Y., April 8, 1854, son of the Rev. Sylvanus and Caroline (Gallup) Reed, and a direct descendant of William Reed who came to the United States from Woburn, England, in the latter half of the 17th century.

He was graduated from Columbia College in 1874 with the degree of A.B.; from the School of Mines in 1877 with the degree of M.E.; and after spending the years 1878–1879 in the physical laboratories of the University of Wurzburg and University of Berlin, Germany, he received the degree of Ph.D. from Columbia College in 1880.

Dr. Reed began his professional career in New York and was engaged in a general engineering practice until 1912, when he retired, and has devoted himself since to private research work. He was the inventor of the Reed Metal aeronautic propeller, which made its first flight August 30, 1921, at Curtiss Field, and he is the patentee under whose basic patents all the aluminum alloy blade propellers at present [1929] used in the United States are made.

In February 1929, the U.S. patent was sold to the Curtiss Aeroplane & Motor Co., Inc., who manufacture and also receive royalties on propellers made by the Hamilton and Standard Companies. Seven foreign concerns are manufacturing under Dr. Reed's pat-



Dr. Reed receiving the Collier Trophy in 1925. With Reed (L-R) Godfrey Cabot (President of the Board of Governors, National Aeronautic Association); Gen. James E. Fechet (Assistant Chief of the Air Service); Dr. Reed and Orville Wright who, in 1925, were both pursuing private research projects. (Wright State University via R. Thomas)

Sylvanus A. Reed with his invention—date and photographer unknown.
(Wright State University via R. Thomas)

ents (owned by him) and the production to date, both foreign and domestic, has been to the value of about \$5 million.

This aluminum alloy propeller, invented by Dr. Reed, has raised propeller efficiency from 75–80 to 80–90 percent. The winners of every Schneider Trophy race since 1922 have used the Reed propeller, and the U.S. Government uses practically none other.

Dr. Reed was awarded the Collier Trophy in 1925, and the honorary degree of Sc.D. was conferred upon him by Columbia University in 1929.

He was formerly an associate member of the American Institute of Mining Engineers and the American Electrochemical Society, and his clubs are the University and Union of New York. In 1895 he married Elmina Wilshire Pomeroy of Boston, Massachusetts, who died in 1897. □

