

## GIUSEPPE MARIO BELLANCA

Bellanca immigrated to New York from Italy as an engineer in 1911 and built and flew his first monoplane on Long Island in 1912, eight years after the Wright brothers historic first flight. G.M., as he came to be called, was an aeronautical genius and a real aviation pioneer who was eventually selected for the Aviation Hall of Fame.

By 1926, Bellanca's WBII model, the Columbia, was Charles Lindbergh's preferred aircraft for the challenge to cross the Atlantic non-stop. For a number of reasons, Lindbergh did not end up with Bellanca's Columbia, which established a world endurance record of 51 hours, 30 minutes, five weeks before Lindbergh's 33 hour, 30 minute flight to Paris. Two weeks after Lindbergh's crossing, the Columbia was flown for a world record of 3911 miles, forced down early only by bad weather after 43 hours near Berlin.

By the end of 1927, with the financial backing of Henry Belin duPont and the help of Mayor Charles Klingmeyer of New Castle, Bellanca moved his company to a location on the west side of New Castle, between the Delaware River and Route 273, starting operations in 1928.

As Delaware's only significant aircraft manufacturer, Bellanca built over 3000 aircraft in his plant until his retirement and sale of the company in 1954. Bellanca's factory and hanger still stand off Route 273.

Every model designed by Bellanca was known for its endurance, speed, and safety, and numerous records were established with each model. A few of the countless records are listed below:

- 1922-Thirteen first prizes in national and international competition.
- 1927-World's Endurance Record, 51 hours, 30 minutes.
  - World's Long Distance Record, 3911 miles, New York to Berlin.
- 1930-Altitude record for commercial aircraft, 30,453 feet.
- 1931-World non-refueling record, 84 hours, 33 minutes.
  - World Long Distance Record, N.Y. to Istanbul, 5,014 miles, 49 hours.
  - First flight across the Pacific, Tokyo to Washington State, 4500 miles.
- 1947-First Prize, Beech Trophy Race.

This year will be the 70th Anniversary of the establishment of the Bellanca Aircraft Corporation in New Castle.