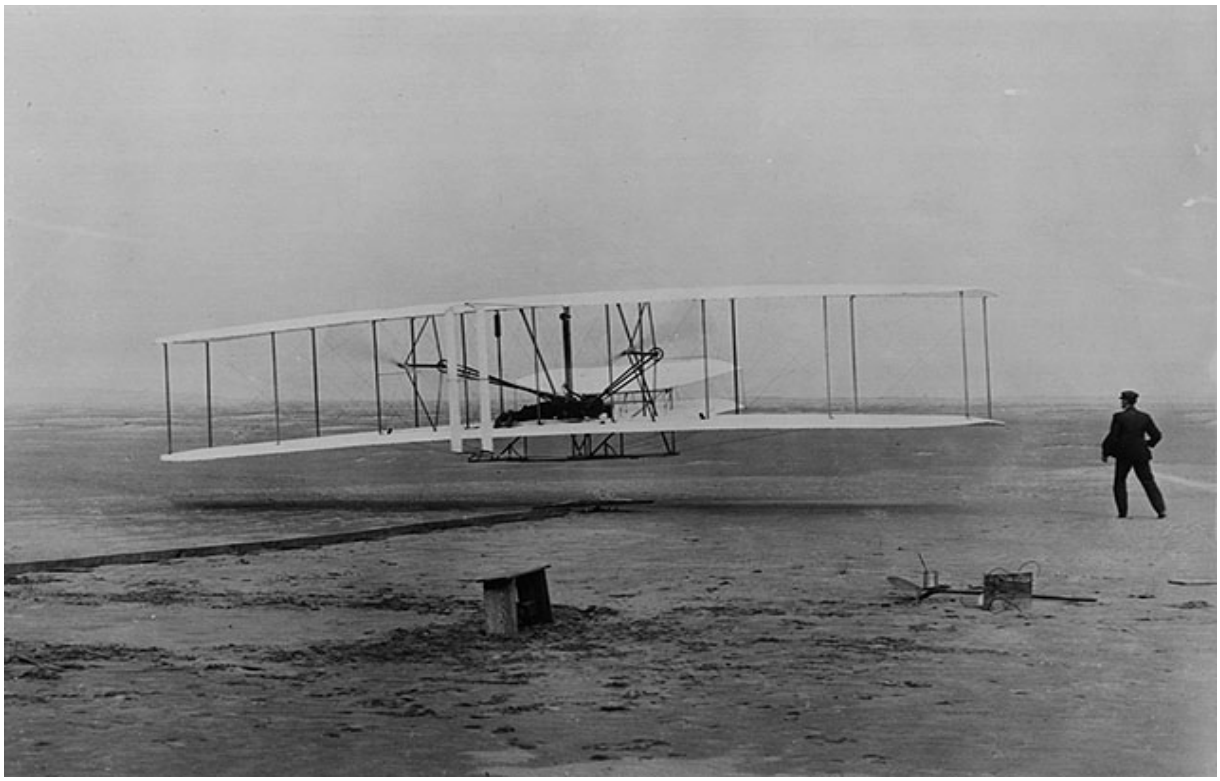
WRIGHT BROTHERS MASTER PILOT AWARD

Information Guide



March 19, 2026

Federal Aviation Administration

1. PURPOSE

The Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award (MPA) Program recognizes individuals who have 50 or more years of experience in piloting or a combined total of 50 years or more in both piloting and supporting aviation operations. This information guide:

- Describes the award,
- Describes the eligibility requirements,
- Explains how to submit a nomination, and
- Explains the selection process of candidates for the award.

2. CANCELLATION

FAA/FA-I-8700-2 (Rev. 6), The Wright Brothers Master Pilot Information Guide dated December 3, 2021 is cancelled.

3. BACKGROUND

The Wright Brothers ***Master Pilot Award***–is named in honor of Orville and Wilbur Wright who were two American aviation pioneers credited with inventing, building, and flying the world's first successful motor-operated airplane. The Wright Brothers made the first controlled, sustained flight of a powered, heavier-than-air aircraft with the Wright Flyer on December 17, 1903 at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. The brothers were also the first to invent aircraft controls that made fixed-wing powered flight possible.

4. DESCRIPTION

The Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award is the most prestigious award the FAA issues to pilots certified under Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 61. The award, named after the Wright Brothers, is to recognize individuals who have exhibited exemplary aviation expertise, distinguished professionalism, and steadfast commitment for at least 50 years of piloting experience or 50 or more years combined experience in both piloting and supporting aviation operations. A distinctive certificate and the airman's Blue Ribbon package is issued after application review and eligibility requirements have been met. Upon request, lapel pins and/or a plaque are available for purchase. Once the award has been issued, the recipient's name, city and state will be added to a published "Roll of Honor" located at https://www.faasafety.gov/content/MasterPilot/RecipientList.aspx.

5. ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award, nominees must meet the following criteria:

- Hold a U.S. Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) or Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) pilot certificate.
- Have 50 or more years of U.S. civil and military piloting experience or 50 or more years combined experience in both U.S. piloting and supporting aviation operations.
- Up to 20 years of the required 50 years may be applicable U.S. military experience.
- The effective start date for the 50 years is:
    - Date of the nominee's first solo flight under a U.S. certificate **or**
    - Date of the nominee's first U.S. military equivalent solo flight **or**

  - Date of nominee's first flight under a valid U.S. certificate issued on the basis of a foreign pilot license.
- The 50 years may be computed consecutively or non-consecutively.
- Be a U.S. citizen.
- Have NOT had any airman certificate revoked. Revocation of any airman certificate will disqualify a nominee for this award.
- Prior enforcement actions (excluding revocation) are not automatically disqualifying. If the enforcement action(s) demonstrates a lack of dedication to safe aviation operations or professionalism, they will be disqualifying.

6. NOMINATION SUBMISSION

Any person who meets the eligibility requirements, or a sponsor on behalf of the eligible person, may apply for the award by submitting a nomination package to the FAASTeam Program Manager (FPM) at the nearest Flight Standards District Office (FSDO). The nomination package must consist of the following documents:

- A completed Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award (MPA) Nomination Form:
  - The Wright Brothers MPA Nomination Form can be found in this document and at: Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award Information Guide.
- Nominee's piloting experience or combined piloting experience and supporting aviation operations history:
  - There should be a *detailed description*, resume, or company records. See sample resume attached to this document.
- Three (3) letters of recommendation:
  - Must be from holders of FAA pilot certificates who can attest to the nominee's 50 years or more of piloting experience or 50 or more years combined experience in both piloting and supporting aviation operations. See sample letter attached to this document.

7. NOMINATION ACCEPTANCE

A FAASTeam Program Manager (FPM) will verify the nomination is complete and that the applicant meets the eligibility requirements listed within this document. Verification of eligibility is performed by reviewing the nominee's electronic Airman File to include a review of the Enforcement Investigations Database. Once confirmed, the nominee's Blue Ribbon package should be ordered. Additional information or an interview by the FPM may be necessary to verify a nominee's qualifications. If there is any question as to whether the nominee qualifies for the award, the National FAASTeam Manager shall be the final authority.

Additional notes on nomination acceptance:

- A current flight review or medical certificate is not required at the time of nomination.
- Prior accident history is not necessarily disqualifying but will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- The award may be presented to a nominee up to 3 years posthumously if the nominee has acquired 50 years of U.S. piloting experience or 50 or more years combined experience in both piloting and supporting aviation operations prior to their death. A posthumous award should only be given with the decedent's family's consent.
- Nominations will take a minimum of 60 days to be accepted.

8. ISSUANCE OF THE AWARD

Presentation - The FPM will contact the applicant or sponsor to schedule the award presentation. The FPM will make every effort to arrange a public presentation at a suitable FAA or industry function. An appropriate FAA representative shall present the award to the nominee at the event.

Roll of Honor – The nominee's name, city and state of residence and month and year of the Master Pilot Award presentation will be posted to the electronic Roll of Honor after the award has been presented.

WRIGHT BROTHERS MASTER PILOT AWARD

Sample Format for a Resume

Resumes should include applicable aviation experience and time frames.

Name:
Summary: description of aviation experience
Certifications/Experience: as applicable

- **Total Flight Hours**: [Total Hours]
- **Type Ratings:** [List of Aircraft Type Ratings]
- **Certifications:** [List of Certifications, e.g., Private Pilot, Commercial Pilot, Airline Transport Pilot]
- **First Solo Flight:** [Date]
- **Private Pilot Certificate Obtained:** [Date]
- **Instrument Rating:** [Date]
- **Commercial Certificate Obtained:** [Date]
- **ATP Certification:** [Date]

Civilian Aviation Experience:

Military Aviation Experience: Job Title, Unit, Location, Years
- Aviation Responsibilities included [describe responsibilities and achievements].

Aviation Positions (for each position): Job Title, Company Name**,** Location, Years
- Aviation Responsibilities included [describe responsibilities and achievements].

Aviation Education:

Degree/Certification: Name, Institution Name, Location, Year of Completion
- Relevant coursework: [List relevant courses, if applicable]

Achievements & Awards:
- [Award Name] - [Date]
- [Recognition for safe operations, if any]

Professional Affiliations:
- Member of [Aviation Organization] since [Year]
- Member of [Aviation Organization] since [Year]

Community Involvement:

SAMPLE

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Sample Letter of Recommendation

(Date)

(Nearest FAA FSDO or FAASTeam Program Manager Address)

Attn: *(FSDO Manager or FAASTeam Program Manager)*

I have known (*Nominee's name*) for *(*number of years known*)* years and highly recommend him/her for the Wright Brother's Master Pilot Award.

My knowledge and association with the nominee consists of *(state your affiliation with the nominee, e.g., Work associate, personal business, friendship, etc.)* ***Please add a detailed narrative of your knowledge of the applicant's aviation background.***

I hold pilot certificate number *(certificate number).*

Respectfully submitted,

(Signed name)

(Printed name)

(Address)

(E-mail address)

(Best contact Phone number)

SAMPLE

WRIGHT BROTHERS MASTER PILOT AWARD NOMINATION FORM

Nominee's Full Name (as it should appear on award certificate)

_____

Contact Information

	Nominee	Sponsor/Spouse
Name	_____	_____
Address	_____	_____
City	_____	_____
State	_____	_____
Zip	_____	_____
Home/Work Phone	_____	_____
Cell Phone	_____	_____
E-mail address	_____	_____

Nominee's Airman Information

Pilot certificate number _____

Highest grade of pilot certificate and ratings _____

First Qualifying Flight:

Date _____

Make/Model Aircraft _____

City/State _____

Training organization (if applicable) _____

50 or more years of piloting experience or 50 or more years combined experience in both piloting and supporting aviation operations to be considered for this award:

Beginning Date _____

Ending Date _____

☐ This award is being presented as a surprise to the nominee.

Nomination Package Checklist

☐ Completed Wright Brothers MPA Nomination Form (this form)

☐ Nominee's piloting history or combined experience in piloting and supporting aviation operations history

☐ Three letters of recommendation

Please forward this nomination package to your nearest FAASTeam Program Manager for processing: Your FAASTeam Program Manager's name and contact information can be located at FAASafety.gov
or
Submit the nomination package to your local FAA Flight Standards District Office.