



**England Economic &
Industrial Development District**
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Alexandria International Airport Honors Aviation Inventors *Charles Page and Leo Ortego Recognized for Industry Contributions*

ALEXANDRIA, La. (September 19, 2025) – Alexandria International Airport (AEX) held a ceremony today honoring the legacies of late Central Louisiana natives, Charles Frederick Page and Paul Leo Ortego, both of whom received aviation-related patents from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Attendees from across the state gathered in the terminal to learn about and memorialize the inventors' contributions to aviation through new murals and historical markers. Speakers included Ralph Hennessy, England Airpark executive director; Michael Wynne, historian and author; Joseph P. Page, grandson of Charles Page; and Marian Nevill, niece of Ortego.

"We are here today to recognize the aviation legacies of Mr. Page and Mr. Ortego," stated Hennessy. "It's an honor to not only display these permanent reminders of their inventions, but also to host members of the Ortego and Page families and the aviation community. Thanks to the England Economic and Industrial Development District Board of Commissioners, mural artists Jed and Liz Cornett of Smoking Monk Studio, and others for their involvement in bringing us to this momentous occasion."

About England Airpark

The England Economic and Industrial Development District is an independent political subdivision of the State of Louisiana. England Airpark encompasses approximately 4,000 acres and includes Alexandria International Airport (AEX). As a mixed-use development offering convenient connectivity through air, interstate highway, rail, and port access, the Airpark features more than 300 residential units and 1.5 million square feet of commercial space, supporting aviation, transportation, manufacturing, education, and engineering sectors. Learn more at www.Englandairpark.org.

About Charles Frederick Page

Charles Frederick Page was presumably born enslaved in Rapides Parish and lived in Pineville, Louisiana, where he built a flyable airship by 1904. He received a patent for his invention two years later. He intended to exhibit his creation at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase World's Fair; however, it went inexplicably missing during transit. Page continued to contribute to the betterment of his community, such as through agricultural pursuits and fostering African American entrepreneurship and homeownership.

About Paul Leo Ortego

Paul Leo Ortego, of Alexandria, Louisiana, was inspired by his service as a World War I pilot to create the first functional helicopter in 1922. The machine could fly both vertically and horizontally, and Ortego received his U.S. patent for helicopter design in 1926. Some design features are still used in modern aviation. Ortego's career led to other aviation-related endeavors, such as designing and testing aircraft and designing a flying car.

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