

in tandem and steered by four independent lines. Since the road toll was based on the number of horses pulling a carriage, this horseless rig was ruled exempt from road tolls because no animals were used.

## **The Airplane**

After years of research and experimentation, the Wright Brothers tested their flying-machine as a kite before they flew it as the first manned airplane in 1903. As the airplane became firmly established, there is little evidence to show that kites were used other than for recreational flying. The main styles of kites flown for the next fifty years were the 3-stick Barn Door, the Diamond, and the Box kite.

## **Military Kites**

The doldrums in kite development were broken for short periods by World War I (1914-1918) and World War II (1939-1945). World War I created a practical use for trains of man-lifting kites. The British, French, Italian, and Russian armies all had kite units for enemy observations and signal corps. The introduction of military airplanes quickly made these units obsolete. The German Navy also used man-lifting box kites to increase their viewing range from surface cruising submarines. In World War II the U.S. Navy found uses for kites such as Harry Saul's Barriage Kite (anti-aircraft), the Gibson-Girl Box Kite (air rescue), and Paul Garber's Target Kite (target practice and aircraft recognition). As in World War I, the German Navy sent observers aloft from surfaced submarines, but this time they used highly maneuverable rotating, gyroplane kites.

## **Recent Kite Adventures**

Since World War II there has been renewed interest in kiting. For example, two of this century's greatest kite innovations, Rogallo's flexi-wing (1948) and Jalbert's parafoil (1964) kites, helped develop the modern hang-gliders and sports parachutes, respectively. In 1972, Peter Powell from England made the dual line stunt kite popular. This led to the public's awareness that kiting could be a "sport" and not just "child's play." With the "kites are for kids" stigma removed, many adults (and children) are again enjoying this healthy, active pastime. The renaissance in the west has led a number of Asian countries to revive their own kiting heritage.

## **Today**

Kite flying is a worldwide sport, recreation, and pastime for thousands of people - from the very young to the eldest, in almost every culture. There are regular kite festivals celebrated annually. There are national and international kite competitions for single-line, dual-line, and quad-line kites. Kites are used for traction on snow, ice, water, and land reaching speeds of more than 40mph. Kites are regularly used for science, artistic expression, celebration, and decoration.