

Kite Flight

No one knows exactly when the kite was invented, but the first written account dates to 200 B.C. in China, when it was used for military purposes.

Two of the three kites shown also served the military. The large, partially assembled example of the Sauls Barrage Kite, designed by Harry Sauls in 1938, was created to fly advertising banners over resorts. The U.S. military, however, launched it from a merchant ship to sabotage enemy aircraft during World War II. Paul E. Garber, the first curator of the Smithsonian National Air and Space

Museum, invented the target kite (left) as an inexpensive way to train anti-aircraft gunners during the same war.

Historical uses of kites include airmail delivery, aerial photography, experiments (think Ben Franklin), and, of course, the precursor to the airplane. Or like this simple "Rocket Ship" yellow kite manufactured by the Alox Company (circa 1960s), kites are flown just for fun.

The EAA AirVenture Museum hosts an annual kite festival. To find out more see page 92.

—Kathleen L. Witman



Photo illustration by Jim Koepnick