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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Mother Nature Just Doesn't Cooperate
in Effort to Recreate First Flight**

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Despite Bad Weather 34,200 Turn Out for First Flight Centennial Celebration

KILL DEVIL HILLS, N.C. – (Dec. 17, 2003) – The spirit of the Wright brothers was alive today on the 100th anniversary of their first flight, but the winds were not.

Around 12:30 p.m. today Dr. Kevin Kochersberger took controls of the world's most accurate 1903 Wright Flyer reproduction for a reenactment of Orville Wright's first flight. However, the engine RPM was lower than expected due to the wet weather. The wind speed also dropped as the Flyer maneuvered down the 200-foot rail. The hopes of a second attempt at 3:45 p.m. also were dashed by low winds on the final day of the First Flight Centennial Celebration at Wright Brothers National Memorial.

"One hundred years ago, the Wrights had the opportunity to wait for the optimal weather to fly," said Tom Poberezny, president, EAA. " We tried to recreate this incredible moment in time on a specific date, and we gave it our best effort."

During an encampment at Wright Brothers National Memorial last month, The Wright Experience conducted three successful flights – two piloted by Kochersberger and one by Terry Queijo. One flight traveled just under 100 feet and another traveled 115 feet.

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“We’ve already proven this Wright Flyer will fly and we’re proud of that achievement,” said Ken Hyde, president of The Wright Experience and master builder of EAA’s 1903 Wright Flyer reproduction. “Today, we just didn’t get the conditions we needed. I want to commend the entire Wright Experience team for their efforts in this incredible cause.”

Kochersberger said, “I could feel the energy and excitement in the crowd. It was an incredible feeling.”

The 1903 Wright Flyer is the centerpiece of EAA’s Countdown to Kitty Hawk presented by Ford Motor Company. For the past 10 years, The Wright Experience sifted through hundreds of documents, drawings and photographs to recreate the world’s most accurate 1903 Wright Flyer.

The Wright Flyer reproduction is now headed to Dearborn, Mich., where it will go on permanent display in the Henry Ford Museum. The museum already owns the Wrights’ bicycle shop and boyhood home from Dayton, Ohio.

“We are really proud of the entire team that built this Wright Flyer and their efforts to share the Wright brothers’ amazing innovation with millions of people,” said Edsel B. Ford II. “Nearly 100 years ago, my great-grandfather dreamed of putting this Flyer on display, so the world could see the genius of the Wright brothers and now we can finally fulfill that dream.”

About EAA’s Countdown to Kitty Hawk presented by Ford Motor Company

EAA’s Countdown to Kitty Hawk is a centennial celebration of the Wright brothers’ first powered flight — an innovation that forever changed our world. Led by EAA, presented by Ford Motor Company and supported by Microsoft Flight Simulator, Eclipse Aviation and Northrop Grumman Corporation, this yearlong series of inspirational events honors the innovation and determination it takes to make world-changing dreams a reality. Countdown to Kitty Hawk features an interactive touring pavilion and the world’s most-accurate 1903 Wright flyer reproduction built by The Wright Experience that attempted to re-enact the Wright brothers’ first flight near Kitty Hawk, N.C., on Dec. 17, 2003 — exactly 100 years later. www.countdowntokittyhawk.org

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