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DECEMBER 17th FIRST FLIGHT CENTENNIAL PROGRAM
TO CELEBRATE "TWELVE SECONDS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD"

KILL DEVIL HILLS, NC, (December 9, 2003) – Event organizers have announced programming for Wednesday, December 17 during the First Flight Centennial Celebration, taking place December 12-17 at Wright Brothers National Memorial. One hundred years to the day after Orville and Wilbur Wright made aviation history here, the celebration will culminate with attempts to recreate one of the most significant moments of the last century – the Wrights’ first heavier-than-air powered flight which took off at precisely 10:35 a.m. and lasted 12 seconds, traveling 120 feet. Dignitaries, celebrities and aviation legends will be on hand to celebrate and commemorate this occasion. Gates and exhibits open on the 17th at 6 a.m., with exhibits closing at 4 p.m., and gates closing at 5 p.m.

Main Stage:

Wednesday’s Main Stage programming will feature an 8:30 a.m. welcome by Fran P. Mainella, Director of the National Park Service; Lisbeth (Libba) C. Evans, Secretary, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources; Kitty Hawk Mayor Bill Harris; Kill Devil Hills Mayor Sherry Rollason, and Dare County Commissioner Warren Judge.

The Northeastern High School Band from Elizabeth City, NC, will play music at 9 a.m., followed by the Presentation of the Colors by the Northeastern High School ROTC Color Guard. Lee Greenwood is scheduled to sing the National Anthem and his signature hit “God Bless the USA”.

The Master of Ceremonies for the morning event is actor and aviation enthusiast John Travolta. At 10:35 a.m., the first of two scheduled re-enactment attempts will take place. Following the re-enactment, the millionth EAA Young Eagle will fly over the Wright Brothers National Memorial with retired Brigadier General Chuck Yeager.

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December 17 Program

2-2-2-2

At 1 p.m., a special dedication ceremony will take place for noted aviator, author and historian Harry B. Combs' donation of an authentic reproduction of the 1903 Wright Flyer to the National Park Service and the American people. Apollo 11 Astronaut Neil Armstrong, Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska, and Department of the Interior Secretary Gale Norton will participate in this ceremony. The second program, including a second re-enactment, continued flyovers, and speakers commenting on the future of aviation, begins at 2 p.m.

Air shows and Flyovers:

A 100-plane flyover will be spaced throughout the day with aircraft representative of the last century, with half of the aircraft commencing their flyovers after the first re-enactment, and the remainder following the second re-enactment. Also participating will be the United States Air Force Thunderbirds, the U.S. Army Golden Knights, and the United States Air Force Academy Jump Team, "Wings of Blue".

First Flight Centennial Pavilion:

In the First Flight Centennial Pavilion Auditorium, seating will be available to the general public on a first-come first-served basis for indoor viewing on the stage's big screen. In addition, the First Flight Centennial Pavilion will feature its current exhibits from NASA, the United States Air Force, The Outer Banks History Center, General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA) and North Carolina's First Flight Centennial Commission.

Exhibits Throughout the Park:

On-site exhibits are filled with interactive activities to educate visitors and engage them in the wonders of flight. Confirmed on-site exhibitors for the six-day celebration include the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA); the United States Air Force; the United States Coast Guard; the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA); the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA); the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA); Dare County Schools; the United States Postal Service, and the First Flight Society. Static aircraft will also be on display throughout the park.

Visitor Center:

The park's Visitor Center will house an exhibit of Wright brothers' artifacts from the Museo Aeronautico Gianni Caproni in Italy. Park rangers will give interpretive talks on the hour, and featured guest speakers will include representatives from the WASP (Women Airforce Service Pilots), the Ninety-Nines and the Tuskegee Airmen.

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December 17 Program

3-3-3-3

All of the most recent information on the First Flight Centennial Celebration can be accessed at the Centennial website on www.firstflightcentennial.org. Friday, December 12 is a non-ticketed day. December 16 and 17 are sold out. General Admission tickets for December 13-15 are still available for purchase for \$10 per day until the daily 35,000-ticket limit has been reached. Ticket sales must be made **in person** from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. at the Fort Raleigh Visitor Center in Manteo, NC. Forms of payment include personal checks, cash, MasterCard or Visa credit cards. **Phone orders will not be accepted.**

For information on accommodations, check the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau website at www.outerbanks.org or call their toll-free number at (877) 298-4373. For information on the event's transportation plan, see http://www.ncdot.org/news/centennialceleb11_03.html

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