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### **EAA'S 1903 WRIGHT FLYER REPRODUCTION ACHIEVES PROOF OF CONCEPT TEST FLIGHT NEAR 'HALLOWED GROUND'**

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#### ***Pilot's Success Prepares Crew for First Flight Re-enactment 100 Years Later***

**KILL DEVIL HILLS, N.C. – (Nov. 20, 2003)** – The Experimental Aircraft Association today announced that its 1903 Wright flyer reproduction was successful in a brief proof of concept test flight near the hallowed ground at the Wright Brothers National Memorial where Orville and Wilbur Wright first flew. The encampment, which involves extensive preparation and rigorous training, will ensure the greatest probability of success for the highly anticipated re-enactment at 10:35 a.m. Dec. 17, 2003. It also has been vital to validating the innovative genius of the Wrights.

**Dr. Kevin Kochersberger** of Honeoye Falls, N.Y., was at the helm of the 605-pound 1903-flyer reproduction, which flew at 1:30 p.m. today in a northward direction for more than 100 feet in 15-18 mph winds. Kochersberger (pronounced COKE-ERS-BERGER), is an associate professor of mechanical engineering at the Rochester Institute of Technology and a pilot with more than 1,400 hours. Kochersberger's flight was the reproduction's first attempt. As an added safety precaution, he wore a helmet and safety harness. Kochersberger is one of two pilots named to fly the re-enactment on Dec. 17. **Terry Queijo** (pronounced KAY-JO), an American Airlines pilot from Trappe, Md., is the other pilot.

"I can't describe how incredible it felt today when the flyer lifted off the track," said Kochersberger, who used 117 feet of the 120 foot-track to lift the flyer above the soil and sand-mixed field. "Now I know with great confidence that Dec. 17 will be a very special moment."

About 100 spectators, including a group of school children, watched the test flight. **Ken Hyde**, the founder of The Wright Experience, which built the authentic reproduction for EAA in his Warrenton, Va., shop, also was there to witness the emotional flight. About a dozen Wright Experience craftsmen served as the ground crew for the test flight.

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Hyde said, "Today, the glider training really paid off. The plane performed exactly as we expected."

As part of the encampment and preparation for the Dec. 17 re-enactment, the pilots, under the direction of legendary test pilot **Scott Crossfield**, have been training with a 1902 Wright glider reproduction at Jockey's Ridge, a series of massive sand dunes south of Wright Brothers National Memorial. The Wrights utilized this training approach a century ago. The group has been working on the Outer Banks of North Carolina since early November. Ironically, Crossfield achieved a similar aviation milestone 50 years ago today, when he became the first man to fly at twice the speed of sound as he piloted the Skyrocket to a speed of 1,291 mph (Mach 2.005).

EAA's flyer, the centerpiece of its Countdown to Kitty Hawk program presented by Ford Motor Company, will attempt to fly in 26 days at 10:35 a.m. on Dec. 17, 2003. The ceremonial flight will be the culmination of the First Flight Centennial Celebration from Dec. 12-17 at the national park.

EAA President and U.S. Centennial of Flight Commissioner **Tom Poberezny**, said, "We congratulate The Wright Experience and everyone involved in Countdown to Kitty Hawk, as we all prepare for the 'real' flight on the centennial. The encampment is part of the intense pilot training and preparation sponsored by Northrop Grumman for next month's re-enactment when millions worldwide witness the recreation of the historic first flight." Poberezny was able to personally congratulate Crossfield, who was in Washington, D.C., for an activity honoring his own historic flight 50 years ago.

**Jill Fannon** of Ford Motor Company, the presenting sponsor of EAA's Countdown to Kitty Hawk, said, "As a company founded on innovation 100 years ago, we're proud to play a major role by providing support and technical advice to make the first flight reenactment a memorable success for the world to celebrate."

**Rich Milburn**, of Northrop Grumman, sponsor of The Wright Experience's pilot training, said, "This encampment and today's successful test flight prepare us for our ultimate goal to recreate the first flight at 10:35 a.m. on Dec. 17 for the world."

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**About EAA's 1903 Wright Flyer Reproduction**

The Wright Experience's commitment to accuracy, quality workmanship and intensive research over the past decade distinguishes EAA's 1903 Wright flyer reproduction apart from others as the most authentic in the world. Research – including wind tunnel testing at Old Dominion University's Full-Tunnel in Hampton, Va., and engine testing at Ford Motor Company's labs in Dearborn, Mich., – give EAA's flyer reproduction and the pilots the greatest opportunities for success. After next month's First Flight Centennial Celebration, EAA's flyer reproduction will join the Wright brothers' original home and bicycle shop at The Henry Ford in Dearborn, Mich. More than 350,000 people have seen this flyer in person after its 11,000-mile, seven-city national tour for EAA's Countdown to Kitty Hawk.

**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 will exclusively re-enact the Wright brothers' first flight near Kitty Hawk, N.C., on Dec. 17, 2003 — exactly 100 years later. [www.countdowntokittyhawk.org](http://www.countdowntokittyhawk.org)

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