



THE Flyer

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Spring 2001

Countdown to 2003

By Kathryn Holten, Executive Director, North Carolina First Flight Centennial Commission

December 17, 1903... With Orville Wright at the controls and his brother Wilbur running alongside, a fragile airplane lifted off the sands of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina near Kill Devil Hill. It flew 120 feet in twelve seconds. The brothers flew three more flights on that cold and windy day, changing the world forever.

In 2003, North Carolina will proudly host the centennial anniversary of the Wright brothers' first flight, and the First Flight Society will be an integral part of the celebration.

To oversee the 2003 centennial commemorations, the Society worked with the General Assembly to establish the First Flight Centennial Commission (FFCC). Our goal is ambitious. We intend to make the world aware of North Carolina's role in the first flight and the subsequent century of aviation, and to invite them to share the celebration with us.

Our mission has four thrusts: public awareness, educational outreach, and a celebratory program, all designed to leave a legacy for the future. In each area we are developing programs that involve business, the arts, education, the military, and humanitarian flight.

We have already developed exciting partnerships with NASA, the FAA, the Smithsonian, the military, Ohio, corporations, aviation organizations, pilots and flight enthusiasts from around the world. For example, the US Mint



Col. McArthur's presentation during the First Flight Society Luncheon included a presentation to the Town of Kill Devil Hills, and to the First Flight Centennial Commission, a swatch of fabric from the Wright brothers' flyer that was flown into space on his last Shuttle mission. From left, FFS board members, Col. Red Smith and Aubrey Heath, Kill Devil Hills Mayor Sherry Rollison, Col. McArthur, FFCC Executive Director Kathryn Holten, and Dare County Commissioner Geneva Perry.

and Governor Easley were great partners in the release of the new North Carolina quarter. This year, 750 million new quarters will be issued, meaning that every U.S. citizen can have a miniature copy of the famous Daniels photograph of the first flight.

We are even reaching into outer space. During the recent 100th flight of the Space Shuttle, North Carolina astronaut Bill McArthur carried our treasured Wright Flyer fabric with him to the international space station. He then

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The Choice is Cessna

By Tom Halfhill

Early Thursday morning, March 22, 2001, Rex Peters arranged a conference call to finalize this year's nominee for the First Flight Shrine. We had sent a list of probable persons to the committee members a month ago that Bill Dyer put together. This year's theme is General Aviation that will focus on designers and manufacturers primarily of civilian aircraft. The list included many familiar names and a few not well-known today.

During the 1920's and 30's, hundreds of persons were involved in designing and building aircraft and some started soon after the famous 1903 flight. So you can see that choosing just one person to be honored is not an easy task and there will be some who will be disappointed that their favorite was not chosen. After some discussion, the committee members united and chose one familiar name that is still producing aircraft today and is well-known for designing several trainer planes for the military and civil use as well as more advanced models for pilots today. Upon approval of the Board of

Directors of the First Flight Society detailed in our By-Laws, Clyde V. Cessna will be our honoree this year. The Flyer will give you a brief biography of Mr. Cessna in a future newsletter.

This year's committee members are: Dr. Tom Crouch and Don Lopez of the Smithsonian Air & Space Museum, Jim Simpson of the Air Force Association headquarters, Tom Poberezny of the Experimental Aircraft Association, Supt. Francis Pelitier of the Park Service and Rex Peters, Red Smith, Tom Halfhill of the First Flight Society. Thanks to all for a difficult job and a deserving choice.

Countdown (continued from front page)

wrote e-mails via our website to students about his voyage. The exercise demonstrated the impact of aviation from those original twelve seconds in 1903 to aerospace and telecommunications -- all this in less than a century! The story was reported nationally and was accessed on our website (www.firstflightnc.com) by visitors from nearly 30 countries.

FFCC is publicizing the centennial of flight in a variety of other ways. Contributing to this effort are our national board of advisors, which includes General Hugh Shelton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (military advisor), Buzz Aldrin (aviation advisor) and Ross Perot (corporate advisor.) Our quarterly Wright Flier newsletter reaches thousands of individuals. Especially exciting are the artists who are celebrating the centennial by creating new works of sculpture, art, literature, and music.

Our award-winning exhibits are playing a key role in centennial activities. Over a million people have seen our 1,600 square-foot exhibit on tour nationally and internationally, while a smaller exhibit is travelling to North Carolina communities statewide. Our special North Carolina displays have been at the National Aviation Museum in Ottawa, the Currency Expo in Basel, Switzerland, and O'Hare Airport in Chicago. The first flight story will next be told in a new exhibit at the Paris Air Show this summer, where hundreds of thousands of international visitors will be invited and encouraged to visit North Carolina in 2003.

The Commission's education programs reach students from the high chair to the rocking chair. An international professional symposium takes place October 22-25, 2001, with adult sessions and concurrent teacher/student workshops. The First Flight Society is a co-sponsor of the symposium, and will be honored at the opening luncheon on October 23. Please log onto the website to view the program and register for the symposium. It will be at the McKimmon Center in Raleigh, and promises to be an exciting event.

For the K-12 sector, the Centennial Schools program provides aviation resources and materials, as well as an annual Centennial Teacher of the Year Award (\$1,000 for the winning teacher and another \$1,000 for the school). Last summer, our North Carolina high school Class of 2003 made fine ambassadors as guests of NASA and Langley Air Force Base at a series of special events. This year, they will go to NASA Space Camp.

On December 17, 2002, it's "wheels up!" as we officially launch the Year of the Centennial of Flight. FFCC will feature at least one major planned activity each month in different parts of North Carolina, leading up to the centennial anniversary itself, on December 17, 2003. For example, significant programs are underway in both Charlotte and Fayetteville, each highlighting different aspects of flight.

We are working with dozens of public airports, museums and historic sites to host special exhibits and a First Flight activity in every North Carolina community in 2003. First Flight Society members will play a vital role in making these events both meaningful and successful in their communities.

The celebration will culminate in a special series of events at the Outer Banks and at the Wright Brothers National Memorial in December 2003. FFCC and the National Park Service are jointly developing on-site activities that will include aerial displays, major commercial and educational exhibits, and speakers of international stature.

The Commission, which receives administrative support from the Department of Cultural Resources, is also working with other state agencies to lay the foundation for this full year of activities. A million copies of the 2003 state travel guide will feature the centennial on its cover, as will the state maps and other publications. DOT's Division of Aviation has a study underway to inventory aviation data and recommend an air traffic management plan for 2003. Groups within the state are meeting to establish an Aviation Hall of Fame to honor

North Carolina's pioneers and military veterans.

FFCC's marketing program celebrates the past while looking ahead to an exciting future. The centennial celebration will feature North Carolina in trade publications, involve national and overseas businesses with aviation ties, and attract conventions in such fields as aerospace, engineering, technology, military, and history. Tabloid supplements in top newspapers around the United States and broad television exposure will help build nationwide interest in North Carolina's centennial activities.

To ensure that our events and programs are world class - and to fully realize the huge economic potential of this celebration - we must supplement our limited state appropriation with private and corporate support. According to North Carolina's Northeast Partnership, every one dollar of tourism expenditures yielded \$1,020 in tourism revenues. We know that, in 1999, visitors to North Carolina spent more than \$11.9 billion on tourism-related activities, so we are encouraging everyone to come to North Carolina in 2003 to celebrate the centennial of flight.

For the next three years, North Carolina will be in the international spotlight, drawing visitors to the Wright Brothers National Memorial, eastern North Carolina, and aviation and historical sights from Murphy to Manteo. The First Flight Society has a special place of honor in having foreseen the unique opportunity we have to celebrate flight while proudly playing host to the world. All of us who are working to create a memorable First Flight Centennial salute the First Flight Society's great traditions and look forward to working closely with the Society through 2003 and beyond.

We invite First Flight Society readers to help create an even greater First Flight centennial celebration by volunteering at www.firstflightnc.com, or calling: 919-733-2003, FAX: 919-715-8959.

Wrights Awarded Distinguished Flying Cross

By Tom Halfhill

The Distinguished Flying Cross was established by Act of Congress (Public Law 446, 69th Congress) approved July 2, 1926, and implemented by Executive Order 4576 signed by President Calvin Coolidge on January 28, 1927. There were later amendments made over the years. Most people understand that the DFC is a high-ranking award for heroism given to military members, but by Executive Order it can be

awarded for outstanding achievement in aviation to civilians.

Thus, during the Seventieth Congress, Session II, Chapter 38, an Act to authorize the President to present the Distinguished flying Cross to Orville Wright, and to Wilbur Wright, deceased was submitted: "Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President be, and he is hereby authorized to present the Distinguished Flying Cross to Orville Wright, and to Wilbur Wright,

deceased, who met and overcame the earliest dangers in aviation and as pioneers made possible the achievements which are now stirring the emotions and pride of our people. The posthumous presentation to Wilbur Wright, deceased, shall be made to such representative of the said Wilbur Wright, deceased, as the President may designate." Approved December 18, 1928.

Orville Wright was able to personally receive the award during the 25th anniversary of the historic first flight at Kitty Hawk. The now

December 17, 2000 in Review

By Tom Halfhill



Douglas Honored—Col. McArthur with Donald Douglas, Jr. (right) after his father's portrait was unveiled on December 17, 2000 (Photo by Lisa Holian)

After months of planning and committing thousands of dollars in advance and involving many people, the big day arrived. Unfortunately, Mother Nature did not cooperate. That is always our biggest concern each year as we plan the annual celebration of the first flight. Probably most attendees have no idea of the work and expense that is involved in putting together this event each year, nor should they. The Society's planning committee starts discussing the next year's event immediately after the 17th of December celebrations end. Some of the desired V.I.P.'s need to be contacted a year in advance and in some cases even more. The aircraft for the flyover also need lots of advance contacts being made. We have on the committee many dedicated people who give of their time to make this annual event to honor the Wright brothers a success. The Society also involves many other people—not necessarily members-- who do their part. Those

named First Flight Society was part of that event as it is involved in implementing special events at Kitty Hawk every year. (For the record, the first recipient of the DFC was Capt. Charles A. Lindbergh, U.S. Army Reserve, who received medal number 1, on June 11, 1927, from President Coolidge in a special ceremony on the grounds of the Washington Monument.)

Our thanks to Amy Childers of Rep. Walter B. Jones' office, Congress of the U.S., for doing research.

of you who attended last year know that we were inundated with storms and rain that made many last minute changes necessary.

The faithful band from Northeastern High School were crowded inside the flight room after the Park employees rearranged the displayed gliders and the attendees took all available chairs and the rest were SRO. The JrAFROTC honor guard from the same school got things started with the post-

ing of the colors and the ceremony was under way. Some of the speakers that were flying in that morning were alerted and cancelled their flights. Donald Douglas Jr., son of the honoree, arrived the day before and was able to give his talk. North Carolina's famous astronaut, Col. William "Bill" McArthur, Jr., drove from his

Characteristics of Success

By Jim Meisner, Jr.

Wilbur and Orville Wright were ordinary men who achieved the unachievable – they mastered what was considered the impossibility of flight and forever changed the course of humanity.

In many ways the brothers were no different than other ordinary Americans – they worked hard at their small business, they enjoyed their leisure time, they very seldom traveled great distances, and they had no burning desire to change the world.

By nearly any standard, the two men were ordinary. Wilbur always worked with or for his brother, and after Will's death, Orville settled back into a quiet life of tinkering in near-obscurity.

But as he reached his early thirties, Wilbur realized he wanted his life to be more than just ordinary. He pursued the secrets of powered flight to change his life from ordinary to extraordinary. And together, the brothers harnessed the power of their personalities to do what no one else could do.

Today, 100 years later, each of us has at our disposal the same success characteristics as the

Carolina home as did some other V.I.P.'s and the day was certainly not a total loss. In spite of the horrible weather there was an abbreviated flyover. From Pope AFB two A10's and a C-130 made passes as did a H-60 chopper from Elizabeth City's Coast Guard—always a dependable group. The contracted C-54 of the Berlin Airlift made several passes as a private plane. All of the other aircraft were cancelled. The luncheon and evening Ball being held inside as usual were not affected by the weather.

So, while we were disappointed that all of the planned agenda was not possible, the annual event was still a success and this year's planning is underway.



The fathers of aviation with the mother of Kitty Hawk Kites, Margaret Epping during the First Flight Society Luncheon where attendees enjoyed a presentation by the Wright brothers reinactors. The "Wrights" also attended the ball that evening and treated the revelers to their version of Trivial Pursuit.

(Photo by Lisa Holian)

Wrights: curiosity, creativity, confidence, dedication, patience, efficiency, self-reliance, optimism, a sense of humor, a willingness to relax, a willingness to collaborate with others, and luck.

Because the characteristics that shaped the Wright's personalities are as essential at the dawn of the 21st Century as they were at the dawn of the 20th Century, their model for success can inspire creativity and innovation in others.

While we all possess some degree of the Wright's success characteristics, few of us investigate and develop these characteristics to the depth necessary to reach "impossible" achievements like the discovery of flight.

In future issues of The Flyer, I will share concepts, suggestions, and ideas from my forthcoming book, "Soar to Success the Wright Way." As I shed new perspectives on familiar Wright stories, I'll explain ways you can further develop the Wright success characteristics to accomplish your own idea of the impossible and forever change the course of your life. Jim can be contacted at thewrightway@www.com.

The Flyer
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A Message From The President



REX PETERS

This year the First Flight Society, with the help of its Programs Committee, has planned some major events to lead up to and increase awareness of the First Flight Centennial in 2003.

On July 22, we will help sponsor the race for the EAA's Air Venture Cup, which starts with time trials in Manteo and finishes—by way of the Wright Memorial and Dayton, Ohio—at the EAA's Air Venture 2001 air show and convention in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

We hope to have one of the Tuskegee Airmen speak at the Memorial in observance of National Aviation Day (August 19).

On October 13-14, in a coordinated effort with the Elizabeth City Chamber of Commerce,

the Society will sponsor a re-enactment of the Wright brothers' 1901 glider experiments. An actor will also deliver the famous speech that Wilbur Wright made in 1901 to the Western Society of Engineers in Chicago at the invitation of Octave Chanute.

And at the celebration of the 98th anniversary of the First Flight on December 17, Cessna Aircraft founder Clyde Cessna, representing General Aviation, will be inducted into the First Flight Shrine at the Wright Memorial.

In closing, I would like to thank the National Park Service, the First Flight Centennial Commission, the First Flight Centennial foundation, and the Dare County Steering Committee as well as the citizens of Dare County. Their continuing support, enthusiasm, and cooperation will ensure a great celebration in 2003.

Communicate! The First Flight Society : 252-441-1903

- Please keep us advised of address changes.
- We like to communicate at lightning speed and zero postage. Please send your e-mail address to dec17@firstflight.org.

First Flight Society Membership Application

Members of the First Flight Society come from all walks (or flights) of life, but we all share a common bond: our love of aviation. The purpose of the society is to foster and promote a public awareness of, and widespread interest in, the origin, history and future of flight, in all its forms, and to memorialize Orville and Wilbur Wright, first in the world to successfully achieve powered flight in a heavier-than-air machine, December 17, 1903, near Kill Devil Hill, at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. Join us by completing the information below and mailing your membership check made payable to the First Flight Society.

Name _____, Address _____, State _____, Zip _____

(Mail to The First Flight Society, P. O. Box 1903, Kitty Hawk, NC 27949)

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