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the Centennial of Flight.



COUNTDOWN

A NEWSLETTER UPDATE FROM EAA



September 10, 2003 - Vol. 1, No. 1

Join 

98 Days Counting Down to Kitty Hawk

Welcome to *Countdown!*

We're in the home stretch of EAA's Countdown to Kitty Hawk celebration, which culminates this December 17 at the birthplace of powered flight, Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. We'll distribute the *Countdown* e-newsletter approximately twice per month to keep you informed of special milestones and events as we approach the big celebration. In the meantime, visit www.countdowntokittyhawk.org for more information.

Hallowed Ground:

Wright Brothers National Memorial is the Centerpiece

In Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina, about four miles south of the community known as Kitty Hawk, along what are known as the Outer Banks lies the Wright Brothers National Memorial. Open every day except Christmas Day, the national memorial features regularly daily scheduled presentations; a visitor center housing exhibits available throughout the year, including replicas of the Wrights' wind tunnel, their 1902 glider and the 1903 *Flyer*. Replicas of the original Wright camp buildings are a two-minute stroll from the visitor center. Adjacent to the camp buildings are granite markers, which designate the lengths of the four successful powered flights on December 17, 1903.



The Memorial: Measuring 62 feet tall with a base of 36 by 43 feet, the granite Wright Memorial pylon dominates the landscape Kill Devil Hills. The commemorative site, marking the location where the Wright brothers' achievements took place, was built at a cost of \$277,688 in 1932. It was dedicated on November 19 that year. It took nearly 1,200 tons of granite, more than 2,000 tons of gravel, 800 tons of sand and almost 400 tons of cement before it was done. ([learn more](#))

Eclipse Aviation's Greatest Aviation Innovations

Featured Innovations: Wright *Flyer* & Boeing 747

Orville and Wilbur Wright conducted their flying experiments in an empirical manner, progressing from kits, to gliders, to the first successful powered flying machine—their 1903 *Flyer*. The brothers succeeded because they solved the problem of three-axis control, which had bedeviled all their predecessors. Highly unstable in flight by modern standards, the *Flyer* nonetheless pointed the true way for all successful aircraft that followed it.

The Wright brothers' first flight at Kitty Hawk covered 120 feet—just over half the wingspan of Boeing's 747, and 30 feet shy of the distance spanned by the jumbo jet's coach cabin. Introduced in 1968, Boeing bet the company on this radical airplane that cost more to develop than the company was worth. Since entering service in 1969,



Boeing 747s have traveled more than 20 billion miles (40,000 round trips to the moon) and carried 2.2 billion people.

[Learn about eight more great innovations.](#)

EAA Young Eagles Program has Goal in Sight

When it was first conceived in 1991, EAA's Young Eagles program stated as its goal the seemingly unthinkable: to provide one million kids with their first small aircraft ride by December 17, 2003. Well, it's September 4, 2003 at this writing, so we're almost there...and we've flown about 960,000 Young Eagles, so we're almost *there*! More than 30,000 volunteer pilots, scores of ground volunteers, and the spirit of EAA have us in position to soar past the million mark with time to spare. Gen. Chuck Yeager, Young Eagles National Chairman, will commemorate the millionth flight during centennial festivities at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, on December 17, 2003.

[Learn more about EAA's Young Eagles program.](#)

Countdown to Kitty Hawk at EAA AirVenture 2003

EAA's Countdown to Kitty Hawk pavilion proved to be one of the most popular attractions at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2003. It also served as the venue for a number of noteworthy announcements for the international aviation celebration: [Pilots of the Century](#) selection; presentation of [airworthiness certification](#) by the FAA Administrator; [Gen. Chuck Yeager and his involvement](#) with EAA's Young Eagles program; and more. Visit the [AirVenture Today pages](#) for more convention coverage.

Kitty Hawk Moments:

Lilienthal...and the Mysterious Book

Wilbur and Orville Wright stand at the forefront of the earliest aviation pioneers – two bicycle mechanics from Dayton, Ohio, who stunned the world by inventing powered flight. Their first successful powered flights on December 17, 1903, marked the culmination of several years of their own experiments with large kites and gliders, and climaxed years of effort by other men to unlock the secrets of flight.

[\(read more\)](#)

Birds...And the Twisted Box

A month after receiving pamphlets and a list of books on human flight from the Smithsonian Institution, Wilbur and Orville Wright were already at work attempting to build a flying machine of their own. It was not a full-sized glider, but rather a small biplane with a five-foot wingspan that was to be flown like a kite. The cloth-covered wings, shellacked to make them airtight, were trussed with wire from side to side. The connecting uprights were hinged, so the upper wing could be moved forward or backward to control the vertical upward or downward movement of the machine.

[\(read more\)](#)

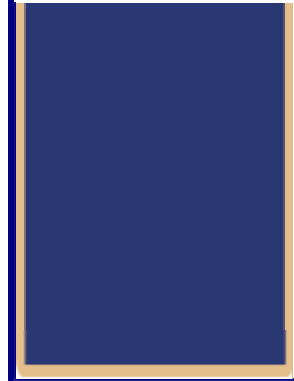
50 Flags to Kitty Hawk Program Progressing

EAA-member pilots play a significant role helping us celebrate the achievements of the Wright brothers and 100 years of powered flight. EAA and the National Park Service's "50 Flags to Kitty Hawk" initiative features one EAA-member pilot from each of the 50 states flying their respective state flag to the Wright Brothers National Memorial in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, during the day of their choice in calendar year 2003. Each pilot will also carry a proclamation from that state's governor declaring the day of their flight "50 Flags to Kitty Hawk Day" for their respective state. To date, nearly half the selected pilot have accomplished their goal.

[\(read more\)](#)

National Air Tours of Yesterday and Today

One hundred years ago, the Wright brothers proved flight was possible. From 1925-31, the National Air Tours demonstrated flight was safe and practical. The National Air Tours were conceived by a group of "air-minded" Detroit businessmen, receiving significant support from Henry Ford and his son, Edsel B. Ford, to introduce Americans to the concept of air travel. During their seven-year run, the National Air Tours traveled more than 29,000 miles and visited 114 cities, demonstrating safe, reliable air travel to people who previously considered aviation a military function or for daredevils. By supporting the tours and lending the trusted Ford name, Henry and Edsel Ford helped convince a skeptical public that passenger flight was a sensible means of transportation.



This month, 26 cities across the eastern United States will experience a time warp as more than 25 rare, historic aircraft from the 1920s and '30s recreate the last, unfinished National Air Tour of 1932. The aircraft recently departed from Willow Run Airport in the metropolitan Detroit area for their 4,000-mile journey.

[\(learn more\)](#)

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