Wright Brothers National Memorial [1]

"Wright Brother's Memorial 2" by Flickr user Serithian. **[2]Wright Brothers National Memorial**

by Wiley J. Williams, 2006

See also: Airplane, First Flight of [3]; Wright Brothers in North Carolina [4].

On 2 Mar. 1927 Congress authorized the establishment of the Kill Devil Hills Monument National Memorial to commemorate Orville and Wilbur Wright [4]'s achievement of the first successful flights [3] of a power-driven, heavier-than-air machine. The area, 428 acres located in Dare County [5] off U.S. 158, was transferred from the War Department to the National Park Service on 10 Aug. 1933. In December 1953 its name was changed to the Wright Brothers National Memorial.

The facility includes a visitors center with exhibits telling the story of the Wright brothers' historic flights, an information desk, and administrative offices. The exhibition area offers a sweeping panoramic view of the Wrights' reconstructed 1903 camp and markers on the ground that designate the takeoff and landing points of the first flights. Nearby is West Hill, the 91-foot-high sand dune that was the setting of the Wrights' gliding experiments in 1901-3. (The National Park Service has stabilized the dune by seeding it with special grasses [6] adapted to sandy soil.)

The actual Wright Brothers Memorial sits atop Kill Devil Hill. Dedicated in 1932, the memorial is a triangular pylon 60 feet high made of gray granite [7] from Mount Airy. Its sides are ornamented with outspread wings in bas-relief, giving the impression of a gigantic bird about to take flight. Stairs lead to the top of the shaft, and an observation platform offers a splendid view of the surrounding area, including dunes and Albemarle Sound. The monument's inscription reads: "In commemoration of the conquest of the air by the brothers Wilbur and Orville Wright conceived by Genius, achieved by Dauntless Resolution and Unconquerable Faith."

Although the memorial is a unit of the National Park Service, theNorth Carolina Department of Cultural Resources [8] manages the First Flight Centennial Commission. Both the National Park Service and the commission actively prepared

for the activities that culminated in the one-hundredth anniversary of the Wright brothers' flight in December 2003.

For Educators:

Flights of the Wright Brothers Lesson Plan[9], State Archives of North Carolina

Additional Resources:

Wright Brothers National Memorial official website: https://www.nps.gov/wrbr/index.htm [10].

Wright Brothers National Memorial Visitor Center official website:http://tps.cr.nps.gov/nhl/detail.cfm?ResourceId=27527013&ResourceType=Building [11].

Wright, Hamilton M. "Chaining a Mountain of Sand [12]," *Popular Mechanics Monthly*, July 1930, pp 99-98.

"Wright brothers take flight in sculpture," [13] *USA Today*. December 13, 2003. http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2003-12-13-wright-bros-sculpture_x.htm [13] (accessed May 29, 2012).

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Subjects:
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Authors:
Williams, Wiley J. [16]
Origin - location:
Dare County [17]
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Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.[18]

1 January 2006 | Williams, Wiley J.

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