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Wright Brothers Day, 1982

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Seventy-nine years ago on December 17 at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, Wilbur and Orville Wright made man's first successful flight in a mechanically propelled flying machine. Although this first successful flight lasted only 12 seconds and covered a distance of only 120 feet, the Wright brothers' historic feat opened the door to the age of aviation.

Today aviation is a key element in American life. It has grown to become one of America's greatest enterprises for jobs and services as well as for national defense. America's air transportation system is the finest in the world and a prime public carrier in the United States.

Although the Wright brothers undertook the first flight long ago, the adventurous spirit exhibited by them continues to inspire the Nation's progress in space and aeronautics. Last year, the United States Space Shuttle Columbia made its first space flight. This year, the fourth and final orbital test flight phase of the Space Shuttle program was successfully completed. Completion of this program now opens a new door to the exploration of space and reflects another outstanding contribution to American aviation. This year also marked the Nation's first successful private launch of a space vehicle, giving rise to expectations of a new era of direct private sector involvement in space ventures.

To commemorate the historic achievements of the Wright brothers, the Congress, by a joint resolution of December 17, 1963 (77 Stat. 402, 36 U.S.C. 169), designated the seventeenth day of December of each year as Wright Brothers Day and requested the President to issue a proclamation annually inviting Americans to observe that day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby call upon the people of the Nation, and their local and national government officials, to observe Wright Brothers Day on December 17, 1982, both to recall the accomplishments of the Wright brothers and to provide stimulus to aviation in this country and throughout the world.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 16th day of Nov., in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and seventh.

Ronald Reagan