



# Wright - Dunbar Heritage News

## Dayton's National Park Celebrates Wright Brothers' International Centennial Events

Dayton's aviation heritage was experienced this summer by a global audience in LeMans, France and Farnborough, England. The Dayton delegation, which included representatives from Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park, National Aviation Heritage Alliance, state and local government officials, and descendants of the Wright family, participated in a series of Wright brothers' centennial activities and programs.

The LeMans-Sarthe 1908-2008 Wright Centennial events brought together the United States Ambassador, the Vice President of the French Senate and Sarthe President, Mayor of LeMans, American and French astronauts, descendants of aviation pioneers and delegations from Brazil, the United Kingdom and Germany.

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Opening of the "Pioneers of Aviation" exhibit July 11, 2008, at the Epau Abbey outside Le Mans, France. Astronaut Buzz Aldrin is addressing exhibit opening attendees, including Superintendent Lawrence Blake, and on his right, Amanda Wright Lane.

## 1908: Fliers not Liars



Wilbur flies in Pau, France 1908. Courtesy of Wright State University Special Collections and Archives.

1908 was a significant year for Wilbur and Orville Wright and for the development of aviation in North America and in Europe. That May, the Wrights flew for the first time since 1905 in preparation for demonstrations of their airplane before potential customers in France and before U.S. Army officials at Fort Myer, Virginia, and brought practical aviation to an international audience.

That summer, after refreshing their rusty flying skills on the modified 1905 Wright Flyer III at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, the Wright brothers went in separate directions. Wilbur travelled to France, where near Le Mans he demonstrated the Wright airplane to an awed European aviation community. Before crowds

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# Superintendent Lawrence A. Blake will Retire After 33 Years of Public Service

Mr. Blake has served as Superintendent of Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park (NHP) for over nine years. Dayton's national park, established in 1992, was one of the first public-private multi-agency parks established and is based on the principle of partnerships.

The park consists of four noncontiguous sites that bring together federal and state agencies



Larry Blake with Laura Bush during her 2006 visit.

with private, non-profit organizations to preserve and celebrate the history of the Wright brothers, aviation, and Paul Laurence Dunbar. The specific sites that comprise the park include: The Wright Cycle Company complex (The Wright Cycle Company, the Wright-Dunbar Interpretive Center, and the Aviation Trail Visitor Center), the John W. Berry, Sr. Wright Brothers Aviation Center, which includes Wright Hall and the 1905 Wright Flyer III, the Huffman Prairie Flying Field, and the Paul Laurence Dunbar House.

Prior to his appointment as superintendent of Dayton Aviation Heritage NHP in January 1999, Larry served as deputy superintendent and chief of operations at Lincoln Home National Historic Site in Springfield, Illinois from 1987-1998. There he managed the restoration of the Lincoln home and many other structures located within the historic site. Larry's prior assignments included chief ranger at George Washington Carver National Monument in Diamond, Missouri; park ranger at Scotts Bluff National Monument in Scotts Bluff, Nebraska; and park technician at the George Washington Memorial Parkway in Virginia, where he began his career with the National Park Service in 1975.

Larry has received numerous achievement awards and other honors throughout his career. In January 2000 he received Department of the Interior's Superior Service Award for his outstanding contributions to the preservation and

operation of Lincoln Home National Historic Site during the ten years he worked there. Through his experience leading the development of Dayton Aviation Heritage NHP since 1999, he has acquired significant knowledge and expertise in fostering and maintaining effective partnerships resulting in the development of new park facilities and exhibits. Additionally, he has led the effort to highlight the significant national heritage associated with Dayton through the successful nomination of the Dayton Aviation Sites to the new U.S. World Heritage Tentative List and initiation and/or completion of the following studies: Manhattan Project Sites Study, Dayton VA Medical Center Landmark Study, American Aviation Heritage Theme Study, and the Wright Company Factory Special Resource Study.

Larry is a native of Garden City, New York and graduated from Union College, Schenectady, New York, in 1972 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in history. Following graduation he taught 5<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup> grade history and geography at Highland School in Warrenton, Virginia for three years.

He is married to the former Joan Moore of Oyster Bay, New York and they have two grown children, Jonathan and Patrick.

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## New Huffman Prairie Flying Field Storage Facility for the Replica Wright B Flyer

The Wright B Flyer, a Wright brothers' 1911 military replica airplane, can sometimes be viewed on the Huffman Prairie Flying Field during fair weather from May through October. However, due to the fragility of the aircraft, the plane needs a more secure structure in which it can be protected. Currently, the aircraft resides in Hangar 145 on the East Ramp of Wright - Patterson Air Force Base's flight line operations.

A new 4,200 square-foot, steel-framed storage facility will protect the flyer while providing more opportunities for public viewing. The storage facility will be built adjacent to the Huffman Prairie Flying Field which will no longer interfere with flight line operations. The contract was awarded on August 25, 2008 to local builder, Better Built Construction Services, Inc., located in Middletown, Ohio.

The facility should be completed and ready for occupancy in the Fall 2009.

The Wright B Flyer is owned and maintained by Wright B Flyer, Inc., a private, non-profit partner organization of the park.

# Dayton's Aviation Heritage Commemorated by Thousands Around the World

The National Aviation Heritage Alliance (NAHA) and its partners concluded two weeks of international activity that began in Le Mans, France and ended at the Farnborough International Airshow, England. NAHA officials estimate that over a quarter million people learned about the Wright brothers and Dayton's aviation heritage during these two international events.



Amanda Wright Lane speaks during the opening of the "Pioneers of Aviation" exhibit July 11, 2008, at the Epau Abbey outside Le Mans, France.

In Le Mans, France, members of NAHA were present for the celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Wilbur Wright's first flight in Europe. The Le Mans-Sarthe Centennial Committee produced an airshow of vintage Wright replica airplanes along with the planes of the Wrights' contemporaries in Europe.

A major exhibition in honor of Wilbur Wright and his pioneer aviation work was opened at the Epau Abbey, a museum in the Le Mans area. Included in the exhibit are artifacts on loan from the collection of the Wright family.

In Farnborough, England, following five days of activity with aviation company executives, the National Aviation Heritage Alliance played host to several thousand visitors as the Farnborough International Airshow moved into its "public days" where the general public had a chance to experience aviation history at the Airshow's Pioneers of Flight Pavilion. The pavilion, with the help of living descendants of great aviation pioneers, held four accurate, full-scale replicas of early 20<sup>th</sup> century aircraft including the AVRO Biplane (1908), AVRO Triplane (1910), the Cody Flyer (1908), and the Wright B Flyer (1911).

Also in the pavilion was the Wright Flyer simulator, which was extremely popular as it gave young and old alike the "virtual" experience of what it was like to fly a Wright brothers' airplane over their hometown of Dayton, Ohio.

Staffing the booth in Farnborough, Larry Blake, Dayton Aviation Heritage National



Boeing Commercial Airlines President Scott Carson sits alongside Wright B Flyer volunteer Walt Hoy on the 1911 Wright B Flyer replica at the Farnborough International Airshow.

Historical Park superintendent reported, "The simulator was the hit of the pavilion and we had a long line of folks waiting to test their flying skills throughout the weekend."

NAHA's international activity was sponsored by Makino, a global leader in metal cutting and manufacturing technology. Makino's North American headquarters is located in Mason, Ohio, just south of Dayton. Additional support was provided by the Dayton Foundation, National Composite Center, Battelle, Commander Aero and the Wright Family Foundation.

## 2008 Dayton Air Show

Since 1997, the park has had a presence at the Dayton Air Show, and this year's show was no exception. On July 19 and 20 the park shared a tent with several other aviation and community organizations. These included the Special Collections and Archives of Wright State University, the Victoria Theater Association and Dayton History's Carillon Park. On Sunday, space was provided for the National Museum of the United States Air Force. The tent featured exhibits on the organizations as well as hand-outs and interactive materials. During the two days over 800 people visited the exhibit tent and were introduced to community organizations.

## AirVenture 2008 Oshkosh, Wisconsin

This summer, at the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) event in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park rangers, Bob Stemple and Bob Petersen spoke to thousands of aviation enthusiasts about Dayton Aviation Heritage sites and other related national parks. They also helped would-be pilots get into the air using a simulator of the Wright brothers' 1903 flyer. The challenging

E X P E R I M E N T A L  
A I R C R A F T  
A S S O C I A T I O N

simulator uses the same type of controls that the Wright brothers used in their historic first flight on December 17, at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. The A-1B Husky float plane from Voyageurs National Park in Minnesota was also on display. During the event Bob Petersen gave several programs in the EAA Museum. Radio interviews and presentations at EAA's KidVenture were also conducted.

# Manhattan Project Sites Special Resource Study

*Congress directed the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of four sites related to the Manhattan Project: Hanford, WA, Los Alamos, NM, Oak Ridge, TN and Dayton, OH, and evaluate their potential for inclusion in the National Park System.*

Since a previous newsletter, distributed to the public in September 2006, the study team, which includes representatives from four National Park regions and the Department of Energy, has evaluated the significance, suitability and feasibility for the sites and developed a range of management alternatives. The draft document will be submitted to the National Park Service's Washington office this fall for policy review and permission to return to the public for comments. Once the Washington review is complete a series of public meetings will be scheduled for each of the four sites.

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# Veterans Administration National Historic Landmark Nomination Update

The Midwest Regional Office of the National Park Service is making steady progress on a nomination of the Dayton Veterans Administration campus as a National Historic Landmark. Historians Mike Pedrotty and Barry Jurgensen have conducted research in Dayton and at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. A draft nomination is expected by the end of the calendar year.

# Congress Considering Three Dayton National Park Bills



Wright Airplane Company factory buildings on Home Avenue in West Dayton, ca 1910. Courtesy of NCR Archives.

Three bills with the potential to affect Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park are under consideration in the second session of the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress.

- S. 3286 and H.R. 4199 request an expansion of the park's boundaries to include Orville Wright's Hawthorn Hill estate in Oakwood and The Wright Airplane Company factory buildings on Home Avenue in west Dayton.
- H.R. 4199 would also allow the park the authority to make grants to legislated park partners and would change the name of the park to Wright Brothers-Dunbar NHP.
- H.R. 6616 would direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of the Colonel Charles Young Home in Xenia, Ohio and other locations connected with his career, to determine if these sites should be included as a unit of the National Park System.

Colonel Young (1864- 1922) was the first African American national park superintendent (Sequoia and General Grant National Parks) and the highest-ranking African American soldier at the time of his death. This bill has been referred to committee. No companion bill to H.R. 6616 has been introduced in the senate.

With little time remaining before the conclusion of the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress on January 3, 2009, the fate of these bills is uncertain. Timely information on their status is available through *Thomas*, the legislative information database of the Library of Congress at [www.thomas.loc.gov](http://www.thomas.loc.gov).

**Did you know,**  
Karen Rosga is the Education Coordinator for the park? School groups are more than welcome to explore our facilities. For more information about programs and what we have to offer, and to make a reservation, contact Karen at 937.225.7705.

# Ford Motor Company Made Colonel Deeds King of the Skies

Many attendees of the 2008 *Dayton Concours d'Elegance at Carillon Park* came to the event already aware of Edward A. Deeds and his central role in automotive history. It was Deeds, Charles F. Kettering, and a group of associates collectively known as "the Barn Gang," who gained fame and fortune with their invention of the electric automobile self-starter. This work was completed inside Deeds' carriage barn at 319 Central Avenue in Dayton. With a simple handshake inside of that barn, Deeds and Kettering formed Dayton Engineering Laboratories Company (DELCO) to mass produce their inventions. After being acquired as an arm of General Motors, DELCO became a giant in the world of automotive parts and parts systems. Deeds became a GM man and Dayton became a GM town.

However, perhaps not as well known is that Deeds made aviation history with a product of GM's chief rival, the Ford Motor Company. In 1928, Deeds purchased the first private, luxury airplane built in the United States. The craft, large for its time, was a tri-motored Ford capable of ferrying 10 passengers in its all-metal body. Dubbed "Kingbird," the Ford

*One of Deeds' most frequent destinations was Cuba,,,*

transported Deeds on hundreds of trips linked to his wide-ranging business interests. One of Deeds' most frequent destinations was Cuba, where he aerially inspected properties held by General Sugar as part of his larger effort to reorganize the Cuban sugar industry during the 1920s and 30s. The Colonel and Mrs. Deeds regularly used the Kingbird for leisure travel as well, particularly for Sunday afternoon visits to Columbus, Ohio.

The Kingbird's long-term pilot, Bernard L. Whelan, was hand-picked by Deeds to operate the aircraft. Whelan was one of 119 men trained in the art of flying at the Wright School of Aviation at Huffman Prairie Flying Field, a flight school established by Wilbur and Orville Wright. His training served him



The *Kingbird*, a tri-motored all metal luxury airplane made by Ford Motor Company was used for local trips or longer flights, such as Cuba. Photo taken at Deeds' estate -- Moraine Farm.

well, for Whelan became one of the most talented and respected private pilots of the interwar period.

Though interesting, the Kingbird's story was not the most important contribution to aviation made by Edward Deeds. That distinction occurred during World War I. When war erupted across Europe, Deeds was appointed to a civilian post on America's Aircraft Production Board to examine the issue of aircraft mass production for the conflict. Deeds remained with the Board until he was appointed acting chief of the Equipment Division of the U.S. Army Signal Corps. In August, 1917, he was commissioned a colonel and formally became chief of the Equipment Division. In this capacity, Deeds directed the development of the Liberty airplane engine, which became internationally famous for both its success in helping to win World War I and for its exploits during peacetime after the armistice was signed. By the end of the war, Deeds oversaw production of over 13,000 planes and 40,000 aircraft engines for America and its allies.

**For a large-type  
version of this  
newspaper,  
call  
937.225.7705**

If you would like to find out more about our park and partners, e-mail us and we'll make sure you receive the latest news from  
**Dayton Aviation Heritage  
National Historical Park.**

You can also e-mail us if you no longer want a newsletter at [daav\\_info@nps.gov](mailto:daav_info@nps.gov)  
**Thanks!**

# Aviation Trail Events

## 105<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Flight Celebration

Wednesday, December 17, 6:00 pm  
National Museum of the United States Air Force, National Aviation Hall of Fame 2008 Inductee Announcement, WPAFB U.S. Air Force Band of Flight concert; reservations required.  
Call 937.434.9108 or 275.5271



Aviation Trail, Inc. celebrated the birthdays of Orville & Katharine Wright with a luncheon in West Dayton at the Wright-Dunbar Plaza Sunday, August 17, 2008.

## Art in the Park

During three Saturdays in July, promising young artists expressed their talents creatively in the park's backyard. Donivan Hahn from K-12 Gallery, a co-sponsor with the Art in the Park event, instructed participants in drawing, painting, collage making and sculpture.



Young artists participating at Art in the Park.

# Welcome New Personnel!

Dayton Aviation Heritage NHP is pleased to report the addition of three new personnel to our park. Brian Fowls has joined the Education & Resources Management Division, and Joe Ludolph and Mitch Gearhardt are two new team members with the Engineering and Facility Management Division.

Joe Ludolph completed his Bachelor of Arts degree in History and is now working toward a Master's degree in Architecture. He is currently enrolled at Sinclair Community College.



Mitch Gearhardt and Joe Ludolph.

Mitch Gearhardt, who has over 15 years of carpentry experience, is also enrolled at Sinclair where he is concentrating on a degree in Civil Engineering. Both are Buckeye fans and enjoy softball and being outdoors.

Brian Fowls is from Chillicothe, Ohio and is currently a student at Wright State University concentrating on a major in organizational leadership. Brian plans to graduate in the fall of 2009 from WSU.



Brian Fowls

## 2008 Speaker Series

Our 2008 Aviation Heritage Speakers Series has been a great success this year with a presentation from Darrell Collins of Wright Brothers National Memorial, North Carolina, and Cincinnati science writer and author John Fleischman. We still have one more speaker slated for this year's series.

Timothy Binkley, October 23 at 7:00 pm  
Mr. Binkley is the archivist and curator at



the United Theological Seminary in Dayton which was co-founded by Bishop Milton Wright. He will speak about his forthcoming book on *Religious Telescope* editorials by Milton Wright.

This series is designed to offer the public a variety of knowledgeable speakers addressing topics related to aviation history through engaging discussion and first-hand accounts. All of these talks are at the Engineers Club, 110 East Monument Street, Dayton, Ohio. These events are free and open to the public.

## Plaza Dedication



The Wright-Dunbar Plaza was rededicated on August 17, 2008 during the Aviation Trail, Inc. Wright family picnic. Pictured from left to right: Larry Blake (Park Superintendent), Mary Ann Johnson (ATI), former Senator Mike DeWine, Dennis Williams (President of Wilcon Construction), Leonard Simpson (NPS), Marvin Christian (ATI).

# 2008 NAHA Education Fair

The National Aviation Heritage Alliance Education Fair was held at the Grimes Flying Field in Urbana, Ohio October 3, 2008. Many 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students from local schools were able to experience several hands-on activities in a rotation style format. Groups leading the activities included Wright State University, National Park Service, Armstrong Air & Space Museum, WACO, Dayton History, and Hartzell Propeller. Amanda Wright Lane also spoke to the students regarding her family's history. Students and teachers learned a lot about aviation via science, technology,

engineering and math while having a great deal of fun. While the students took a lunch break, the replica Wright B Flyer performed a flyover and then landed. The children gathered around the pilots and listened to them speak about the plane and the Wright brothers' aircraft. The Wright B Flyer then taxied and took off giving the students a great opportunity to see this plane both in action and up close. They also had the opportunity to visit the Grimes facility, see their B-17 project and other aircraft up close.

# Prairie Workshop

The park's second prairie workshop was held on Tuesday, July 15 with 30 people in attendance. The workshop focused on the natural history of one of Ohio's largest tallgrass prairie remnants with presentations on the wildflowers, prairie development and the birds of the prairie. The day-long event included a guided tour of Huffman Prairie with several regionally known experts in aspects of prairie development and wildlife.

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## *Farnborough International Airshow continued from the front page...*

During the Farnborough International Airshow, aviators and aviation enthusiasts from around the globe had an opportunity to enjoy a "flight" over Huffman Prairie as they settled into the seat of the Wright Flyer simulator at the Pioneers of Flight Pavilion. The pavilion, with the help of living descendants of great aviation pioneers, held four accurate, full-scale replicas of early 20<sup>th</sup> century aircraft including the AVRO Biplane (1908), AVRO Triplane (1910), the Cody Flyer (1908), and the Wright B Flyer (1911).

The original Wright B Flyer was designed to provide pilot training and reconnaissance for the US Army Signal Corps and was used for that purpose from 1911 to 1914. The replica Wright B, presented by volunteers from the National Aviation Heritage Alliance based in the Wright brothers' hometown of Dayton, Ohio, was sponsored by Makino's North American headquarters located in Mason, Ohio. The National Park Service, represented by Superintendent Larry Blake and the National Aviation Heritage Alliance were

invited to Farnborough to help celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first flight in Great Britain. The Farnborough International Airshow is the largest, most internationally attended aerospace event in the world and is a globally renowned showcase of aerospace equipment and technology. It provides a venue for the world's civil and military aerospace suppliers and their customers to meet and finalize business transactions. More than \$50 billion in orders was announced at the 2008 show.

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## *1908 Flyers not Liars continued from the front page...*

that included local residents, government and business officials, and European nobility and royalty, Wilbur set nine new world flight records in flight duration, distance, and altitude between August and January 1909. He also carried passengers and trained pilots for La Compagnie Général de Navigation Aérienne, which purchased the Wright patents in France. His work earned for the Wrights gold medals from the Aéro-Club de France, the French Académie des Sports, the Aero Club of the United Kingdom, the Aeronautical Society of Great Britain, and the Society for the Encouragement of Peace as well as prizes totaling nearly 29,000 French francs (the equivalent of approximately \$130,000 in 2007 U.S. dollars), and the 1908 Michelin Cup for the longest flight of the year. Wilbur moved

camp to Pau in the foothills of the Pyrenees Mountains in August; Orville and Katharine Wright joined him there in January of 1909.

Meanwhile, after the Kitty Hawk tests and a return to Dayton, Orville ventured to Fort Myer, Virginia, across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C. There he demonstrated the capabilities of the Wright airplane to a crowd that included officers of the U.S. Army Signal Corps, with which the Wrights hoped to sign a contract for the purchase of their airplane by the U.S. military. While most of Orville's flights proceeded without incident, the trial ended on 17 September when a broken propeller caused a crash that severely injured Orville and killed his passenger, Lieutenant Thomas Selfridge. Selfridge was the first

person to die in an airplane accident. The Signal Corps postponed the acceptance trials until 1909, stating that regardless of the crash Orville's flights at Fort Myer "secured him a lasting place in history as the man who showed the world that mechanical flight was an assured success." Orville's 1909 flights exceeded the contract specifications, securing an order for the Wright airplane from the Signal Corps.

Officials in France and at Fort Myer arranged commemorations for the centenaries of these events, directing public attention to the important achievements made by the Wrights in 1908 amid disaster and death.



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

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## EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Dayton Aviation Heritage  
National Historical Park

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of Interior

Park Superintendent – Lawrence Blake

Chief of Education and Resources  
Management – Ann Honious

Newsletter Editors and Design  
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### Contributors

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### Comments?

Write to: Superintendent  
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(937) 225.7705  
[www.nps.gov/daav](http://www.nps.gov/daav)

## 2008 Bike-with-a-Ranger Highlights

110 people participated in this year's "Bike with a Ranger" program sponsored by the National Park Service. These bicycle rides consisted of two tours a month during the 2008 summer and provided a healthy and environmentally friendly way to explore Dayton's history. These casual tours were paced so that participants could socialize and enjoy as well as learn about the region's aviation history.

During the 10-mile tour, called "A Living Legacy: Huffman Prairie Flying Field to Wright - Patterson AFB," visitors learned how the Wrights used the prairie to develop their heavier-than-air machines, taught themselves and others how to fly and how it inspired the development of Wright - Patterson Air Force Base. The tour also stopped by the special collections and archives of nearby Wright State University, which contains one of the largest collections of Wright papers and artifacts.

The longer tour (15 to 20 miles), called "The Gem City: Historic Sites and Homes of Dayton," covered historic landmarks of



Cyclist enjoy a stop at the Dunbar House.

Dayton that included Hawthorn Hill, Orville Wright's mansion in Oakwood. Special thanks go to Steven Wright, Wilbur and Orville's great grand-nephew, who treated the bicyclists to an extensive tour of the estate.

If you missed our 2008 Bike-with-a-Ranger season, don't worry, you can catch a ride next summer. Call us in the spring of 2009 for information at 937-425-0008.