



*NEWS RELEASE * NEWS RELEASE * NEWS RELEASE*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 13, 2010

For more information contact:
Michael Eloff, Chairman, USATS Board of Trustees, 937-221-7820 or mike@shumsky.com
Brenda Kerfoot, General Manager, VDAS, 937-898-5901 ext. 133 or brenda@daytonairshow.com

2010 Marks 100 Years of Air Shows Wright Brothers' 1910 Performance Credited as First Dayton Show

Dayton, Ohio – When the U.S. Navy Blue Angels and other air show performers take to the Dayton skies this weekend they will be marking the 100th anniversary of air shows in North America as well as in Dayton.

Following on the heels of the first air show in Reims, France in 1909, organizers in Los Angeles are credited with hosting the first official North American air show in January, 1910 that drew 250,000 fans. But Dayton was soon to follow with “air shows” of its own.

The annual air show put on today formally began in 1975. But the tradition of air shows in Dayton is much older. The air show institution as we know it goes back to the dawn of flight itself. The public, it seems, has always been drawn by the spectacle of flight, and there have always been aviators who were as much showman as pilot. When it comes to aviation exhibitionism, the Wright Brothers were the famous exception. They made their flights without fanfare and only publicized their first powered-flights at Kitty Hawk after the fact.

The Wrights didn't try to hide their Dayton flying experiments from the public. When they were first setting up on Huffman Prairie in May 1904, they invited the Dayton and Cincinnati press to witness their first flights. Bad weather permitted only two attempts over several days, yielding one brief hop. A few stories appeared, but the news drew few visitors, and that was fine with the Wright Brothers.

By 1910, aviation was a part of the daily news diet in Dayton. Local papers reported every major flying feat around the world. Winter isn't the flying season in Ohio, but the winter of 1910 was a busy time for the Wright Company. It would need a place to test its new airplanes, so the Wright Brothers leased their old Huffman Prairie flying field.

Flying became a daily activity on Huffman Prairie in May. The Wright Brothers were testing design changes that would become the B Model. They also opened the company's flight school there. And the exhibition team moved its training to Huffman Prairie.

-MORE-

In 1920 on Wednesday, May 25 and Thursday, May 26, the Wright Brothers held what appears to have been their first scheduled exhibition on Huffman Prairie. On Wednesday, they hosted the Dayton Aeroplane Club. Only Aeroplane Club members were allowed onto the field. So in that sense, it wasn't a public air show. But the club's plans were reported in advance, and the public seemed to be aware of the date and time of the event. While the numbers might well be exaggerated, estimates of between 2,000 and 3,000 spectators lined the edge of the field, and vehicles lined the roadway for a half-mile.

The May 26th event was held for about 150 southwestern Ohio bankers, but again reportedly "thousands" of onlookers showed up. These weren't air shows in the modern sense, but they were clearly exhibitions scheduled and performed for large groups, and they were the first ones involving airplanes in the Dayton region. Arguably then, on May 25 and 26, 1910, the Dayton area saw its first air show.

Headlining this year's Vectren Dayton Air Show Presented by Kroger are the US Navy Blue Angels, who will appear with aerobatic legends Sean D. Tucker and the AeroShell Aerobatic Team along with newcomers Pirated Skies Wing-walking, Greg Poe, Team Fastrax skydiving and School Time, the Jet-Powered School Bus. The show will also celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the legendary WWII B-17 bomber with a dramatic bombing reenactment complete with pyrotechnics. The USAF F-16 Fighting Falcon and US Navy F-18 Super Hornet Demonstrations are also part of this year's star-powered lineup.

While some premium seating areas have sold out, limited numbers of premium seats remain available in the Blue Sky Chalet and the Pavilion Check out all the terrific ticket options on the show's web site, www.daytonairshow.com. Deep discount advance tickets are also conveniently available exclusively at Kroger stores in the Dayton-Cincinnati region.

-End-

Sources:

"The Air Shows of 1910: The Genesis of Air Shows in Dayton, Ohio, and America", by Timothy R. Gaffney, 2010.

"The First Century: 100 Years of North American Air Shows", by Roger Mola, 2010.

Founded in 1975, the Vectren Dayton Air Show Presented by Kroger is one of America's premier air shows. The Air Show showcases world-class aerobatic champions, military jet demonstrations and entertainment for the whole family celebrating Dayton's aviation heritage as home of the Wright Brothers, National Museum of the US Air Force and Wright Patterson AFB. For more information visit www.daytonairshow.com