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NAA ANNOUNCES THE MOST MEMORABLE AVIATION RECORDS OF 2016

Washington, DC, April 20, 2017 – As the official record keeper for United States aviation, the National Aeronautic Association tracks dozens of world and national record attempts each year. New U.S. records are certified by NAA and those qualifying as world records are then ratified with the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI). At the end of each year, under the direction of the NAA Contest and Records Department, records certified for that year are reviewed and a list of the "most memorable" is created.

Below is a chronological list of the most memorable records of 2016:

Duration: 9 hours, 26 minutes, 49 seconds

Record for balloons (Class AX-3—hot air balloons with a volume of 14,126 < 21,189 cubic feet)

On January 10—a day that would see the temperature rise barely above 0°F along the route of flight—**Greg Winker** took off an hour before sunrise from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and landed north of Worthington, Minnesota, just before sunset. His flight in a homebuilt hot air balloon beat the previous record of 7 hours, 27 minutes set in 2001.

Speed Over an Out and Return Course of 300 Kilometers: 189.62 mph

Record for gliders (Class DM2—multiplace motorglider, general)



After self-launching a Schempp-Hirth Arcus M motorglider from Rosamond Skypark in California, on March 14, **Jim Payne** flew along the Sierra Nevada mountains between Inyokern, California and Big Pine, California. He made three round-trip passes over the 210-mile course that day, with each one getting faster as the day progressed and the mountain wave grew stronger. He set the record on the last pass, breaking his own record of 158.47 mph set a year earlier.

Speed Over a 2,000 Kilometer Closed Course: 291.09 mph

Record for airplanes (Class C-1.d, Group I—piston engine airplanes weighing 3,858 < 6,614 pounds)



John Brush made a non-stop flight from Colorado Springs, Colorado to a turnpoint near Blue Earth, Minnesota, and back to Colorado Springs on May 20, flying a Smith Aerostar 601P. The flight covered 1,249 miles in 4 hours, 17 minutes. He beat the previous record of 272 mph, set in 1975.

Duration: 12 hours, 46 minutes, 29 seconds

Record for model aircraft (Class F5—radio-controlled airplane, electric motor with a combination of currents)

Just before 7 a.m. on September 19, **Andre Mellin** hand launched his model airplane (named “EXACTLY-H”) from a field near Liberty, Indiana. With **Dave Brown** initially at the controls for takeoff, the two took turns flying throughout the day, landing just after sunset. The 15.8-foot wingspan model weighed just under 9 pounds and was powered by a hydrogen fuel cell and 40 lithium-ion batteries. They beat the previous record of 8 hours, 29 minutes set two months earlier.

Speed Over a 1,000 Kilometer Closed Course: 138.05 mph

Record for rotorcraft (Class E-1.c, Group I—piston engine helicopter weighing 2,205 < 3,858 pounds)

Departing from Missouri’s Cape Girardeau Regional Airport on October 29, **Paul Salmon** flew a Robinson R44 Raven II to Hope, Arkansas and then returned to Cape Girardeau. The non-stop flight covered 667 miles in 4 hours, 50 minutes. He broke the previous record of 64 mph set in 1953.

Largest Formation, Night: 40 skydivers

Record for parachuting (Class G-2—nighttime formation skydiving, general)

On the evening of November 11, 40 skydivers (including organizer **Steve Woodford**) jumped from two Twin Otters at more than 16,000 feet above Eloy, Arizona. With help from a nearly-full supermoon and color-coded LED lights affixed to their harnesses, they all joined together in a freefall formation before deploying their parachutes for landing. This was the first record set in this new nighttime classification.

Speed Over a Recognized Course, Taipei, Taiwan to Phoenix, Arizona: 646.17 mph

Record for airplanes (Class C-1.m, Group III—jet engine airplanes weighing 99,208 < 132,277 pounds)



Departing from the Taipei Songshan Airport on November 21, Gulfstream pilots **Brian Erickson, Scott Curtis, and Erik Kauber** flew a G650ER nonstop to the Scottsdale Airport near Phoenix. The flight lasted 10 hours, 58 minutes, and covered more than 7,086 miles. There was no previous record set along that route.

Duration: 55 hours, 56 minutes, 14 seconds

Record for unmanned aerial vehicles (Class U-1.c, Group I—remotely controlled, piston engine UAV weighing 110 < 1,102 pounds)



After being launched from a tow dolly behind a pickup truck, a Vanilla Aircraft VA001 climbed to 6,000 feet above the command center at Las Cruces International Airport in New Mexico. It then flew a figure-eight pattern more than 600 laps over the next two days, before landing on December 2. The diesel-engine powered UAV, which weighed 420 pounds at takeoff, was remotely piloted by **Jeremy Novara, Timothy Lower, Joseph Millette, and Daryl Perkins**, who each took turns at the controls. This was the first record in its class.

“The history of aviation is the history of men and women working hard to push the envelope and re-define what is possible,” said Greg Principato, NAA President & CEO. “NAA views its role certifying aviation records as critically important. We congratulate these amazing record setters for raising the bar and making aviation history.”

The record setters will be honored at NAA’s Summer Awards Ceremony which will be held on June 22, 2017 at the Lockheed Martin Fighter Demonstration Center in Arlington, Virginia.

The National Aeronautic Association is a non-profit membership organization devoted to fostering opportunities to participate fully in aviation activities and to promoting public understanding of the importance of aviation and space flight to the United States. NAA is the caretaker of some of the most important aviation awards in the world, and certifies all national aviation records set in the United States. For information, visit www.naa.aero.

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