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NAA ANNOUNCES THE MOST MEMORABLE AVIATION RECORDS OF 2018

Washington, DC, April 3, 2019 – As the official record keeper for United States aviation, the National Aeronautic Association certified 99 national records last 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 2018:

Speed Over a 500 Kilometer Out and Return Course: 158.53 mph

Record for gliders (Class D15—15-meter, general)

After releasing from tow above the Omarama airport on the South Island of New Zealand, **Keith Essex** flew a Schleicher ASG 29 E to a waypoint 155-miles to the north-east, and then flew along the same course back to Omarama in just 1 hour and 58 minutes. His flight on February 16 broke the previous record of 139 mph, set in 2013.

Speed Over a Recognized Course, Seville, Spain to Abu Dhabi, UAE: 631.80 mph

Record for airplanes (Class C-1.k, Group III—jet engine airplanes weighing 55,116 < 77,162 pounds)

On February 25, Gulfstream GVII-G500 pilots **Ross Oetjen, Tony Briotta, and Todd Hicks**, departed Seville airport in southern Spain and flew non-stop to the Al Bateen Executive Airport in Abu Dhabi. The 3,632-mile flight took just 5 hours and 45 minutes. Although there was no previous record along that route, it was the fastest speed record of the year.

Time to Climb to 3,000 Meters: 1 minute, 39.6 seconds

Record for airplanes (Class C-1.b, Group I—internal combustion engine airplanes weighing 1,102 < 2,205 pounds)

Powered by a 650-horsepower rotary engine, **Daniel Gray** flew his Harmon Rocket IIA to a height of 9,843 feet above the Oxnard, California airport in less than 100 seconds. Timed from a standing start, his flight on April 19 beat the previous record of 1 minute, 59.5 seconds, set in 2015.

Large Formation Sequential, Head-Down Orientation, 4 formations: 42 skydivers

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

On June 30, **42 skydivers** joined together above Ottawa, Illinois, in a head-down formation. Then, 15 skydivers in the formation momentarily released and then rejoined the group, creating a new formation—and then repeated the sequence to form 4 successful formations. The group beat the previous record performed by 33 skydivers in 2014.

Distance Goal and Return: 33.9 miles

Record for model aircraft (Class F5—radio controlled, electric motor helicopters)

After launching his model helicopter from a field alongside U.S. Route 93 near Majors Place, Nevada, **John McNeil** hopped into the back of a pickup truck where he controlled the model during the ride to the designated turnpoint 17 miles to the north. The truck then turned around and they proceeded back to Majors Place for landing. The flight on July 20 beat his previous record of 31 miles set in 2016.

Absolute Altitude: 74,334 feet

Record for gliders (Class DO—open class, general)

In their continued quest to reach 100,000 feet in stratospheric mountain waves over the Andes mountains, **Jim Payne** and **Tim Gardner** flew the Pelan 2 glider to another record-setting height on September 2. Their flight from El Calafate, in southern Argentina, beat the previous record of 63,808 feet set just one month earlier with the same aircraft.

“Aviation achievement and the National Aeronautic Association go hand in hand,” said Greg Principato, NAA President & CEO. “As U.S. aviation’s official recordkeeper for more than a century, this is a role we value highly. This year’s most memorable records cover many aspects of flight, showing the power, speed, ingenuity and daring of today’s pioneer aviators. We are proud to have them take their place next to the many great aviators who came before, and to recognize their achievements publicly.”

The record setters will be honored at NAA's Summer Awards Ceremony which will be held on May 1, 2019 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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