

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**National Science Center Kicks Off Yearlong
“Celebration of Flight . . . 100 Years and Soaring”
with “First in Flight” Exhibit**

Augusta, GA -- The National Science Center, headquartered at Fort Discovery, kicks off its yearlong **“Celebration of Flight . . . 100 Years and Soaring”** activities on Tuesday, December 17, 2002, at 10 a.m., with the unveiling of the first part of an exhibit focusing on **“First in Flight.”** **“First in Flight”** will feature photographs, videos, posters, articles and models that celebrate the proud history of the Army’s early efforts to make a heavier-than-air flying machine an important part of the nation’s military arsenal.

On December 23, 1907, Brigadier General James Allen, Chief Signal Officer of the Army, issued Signal Corps Specifications Number 486, “Advertisement and Specification for a Heavier-Than-Air Flying Machine.” The contract was ultimately awarded to the Wright brothers and the military’s journey into the era of flight had begun.

“First in Flight” exhibits will showcase:

- **The first Aviation Office** in the military, the Aeronautical Division in the Office of the Army’s Chief Signal Officer.
- **The first specifications for “a heavier-than-air flying machine,” Signal Corps Specification No. 486.**
- **The first military test flight** at Fort Myer, Virginia, September, 1908.
- **The first airplane passenger**, Lt. Frank P. Lahn, September 9, 1908.
- **The first air tragedy.** . . the death of Lt. Thomas E. Selfridge, first person to die as a result of an airplane accident.
- **The delivery of the first military aircraft**, Signal Corps airplane No. 1 on August 2, 1909.
- **The Signal Corps Winter Flight School in Augusta, GA** from 1911 – 1913, including the Wright brother’s visit to the school in Augusta.
- **The first Radiotelephones in airplanes . . . and more.**

“First in Flight” exhibit development will be accomplished through a partnership with the Signal Corps Museum at Fort Gordon, GA.

(more)

ADD ONE

“CELEBRATION OF FLIGHT” EXHIBIT

According to Joe Edwards, CEO and Chairman of National Science Center, Inc., “This first part of the exhibit is dedicated to **“First in Flight,”** acknowledging the contributions of the early pioneers in flight and also the role played by the Army, particularly the Signal Corps, in taking manned flight from a concept to an integral part of the way we defend our country. This exhibit will grow during the year as we continue to highlight the accomplishments of all of the pioneers of the first hundred years of manned flight. Next fall, we will debut a much larger exhibit in our 5,000 square-foot Knox Gallery. This entire yearlong project will not only pay tribute to those who accomplished so much in the area of flight, it will help explain the science and technology developments that were key to man’s reaching for the sky and now reaching for the stars.”

“The Army is a proud partner in the National Science Center and what’s particularly important for us at Fort Gordon, home of the Army’s Signal Regiment, is the role played in the early years of the development of flight by the Signal Corps. As you can see in this exhibit, the Signal Corps issued the first specifications for an airplane to be used by the government. As the National Science Center’s celebration of flight continues for the next year, we will have several opportunities to participate in workshops, presentations and will help shape the exhibits through collaboration with the Signal Corps Museum,” stated COL Jeffrey W. Foley, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon.

For updates and information about the National Science Center’s **“Celebration of Flight . . . 100 Years and Soaring”** activities and other National Science Center programs, visit our website at www.NationalScienceCenter.org.

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The National Science Center was established by an Act of Congress to inspire the youth of America and is a partnership between the National Science Center, Inc. and the United States Army.