

Media Advisory
For Immediate Release



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Military “Celebrities” Share Tales of Space Adventure, POW Survival and Aviation’s Past and Future

Pensacola, Fla.—May 5, 2008—Soar into space with stories of cosmic adventure from former Astronauts. Hear tales of survival and heroism from POWs captured during Vietnam. Learn about the future of aviation from top-ranking military officials. The Naval Aviation Museum Foundation’s 22nd Annual Naval Aviation Symposium brings together military elite May 7–9 at the National Naval Aviation Museum for three days of exciting events including a golf tournament, performances by the Navy Band New Orleans and three panel discussion sessions.

Session I begins at 9:45 a.m. on Thursday, May 8 in the Blue Angels Atrium. The session will discuss “Space Shuttle: Naval Aviation Leadership” and will feature such military celebrities as Retired Navy Capt. Robert Crippen who piloted “the boldest test flight in history” and Navy Cmdr. Sunita Williams, a world record setter for females with four spacewalks totaling over 29 hours.

Symposium guests are invited to a luncheon following the first session on the Flightdeck from noon–1:15 p.m., featuring Retired Navy Rear Adm. Jimmie Taylor, who participated in the first F-14 combat sorties during Operation *Frequent Wind*, which concluded U.S. presence in Vietnam with the evacuation of Saigon.

Panel Discussion **Session II**, “Naval Aviator POWs: Return With Honor” begins at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 8 in the Blue Angels Atrium. Featured panelists include Retired Navy Capt. John Enschede, an accomplished pilot who flew in 285 combat missions before being downed by a surface-to-air missile in August 1972 and Retired Navy Capt. J. Michael McGrath, who flew 179 combat missions before being downed by enemy gunfire in 1967 over North Vietnam. He chronicled and illustrated his experience in his book, “Prisoner of War—Six Years in Hanoi.” Capt. McGrath will do a book signing at the Museum’s Flight Deck Store on Thursday, May 8 and Friday, May 9.

Panel Discussion **Session III**, “Naval Aviation: Issues and Answers” begins at 9:45 a.m. on Friday, May 9 in the Blue Angels Atrium. Active Navy & Marine Corps flag and general officers will discuss the state of Naval Aviation, including Navy Rear Admiral James Kelly, a pilot with the first attack squadron enforcing the United Nations no-fly zone in southern Iraq, Operation *Southern Watch* and Coast Guard Rear Adm. Gary Blore who participated in the U.S. response to the Cuban Refugee Crisis of 1980.

Symposium guests are invited to a closing banquet from 7–9 p.m. on Friday, May 9 in the Blue Angels Atrium featuring Navy Vice Adm. David Venlet, who performed the first carrier landing of the T-45 on *USS John F. Kennedy*. The Pensacola Children’s Chorus will also perform at the banquet. Reservations and tickets are required.

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The Symposium sessions are FREE and open to active duty and retired military as well as the general public. For more information or to reserve your seat, call the Naval Aviation Museum Foundation at (800) 327-5002 or (850) 453-2389, or go online to download a registration form at NavalAviationMuseum.org.

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Media Note: For a full list of Symposium Panelists, please reference the accompanying document. For more information about the National Naval Aviation Museum, contact Shelley Ragsdale, Naval Aviation Museum Foundation, Inc. at (850) 453-2389 or sragsdale@navalaviationmuseum.org.

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About the National Naval Aviation Museum

The National Naval Aviation Museum features nearly 300,000 square feet of displays and is one of the world's largest aviation museums. Located aboard Pensacola Naval Air Station, the facility boasts more than 150 beautifully restored aircraft representing Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard aviation and is Florida's most-visited museum. Among the countless things to touch, see and experience is a thrilling Top Gun flight simulator, a variety of special exhibits as well as the drama and power of amazing IMAX® films. The Cubi Bar Café offers a unique dining experience, and the Flight Deck Store is the perfect place to find a memento of the spirit of Naval Aviation. Museum admission is FREE. The National Naval Aviation Museum is open everyday from 9 a.m.–5 p.m., except Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day. For more information, visit NavalAviationMuseum.org.

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