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GETAFE AIRFIELD IN SPAIN TO BE DESIGNATED A HISTORIC AEROSPACE SITE

Location of First Successful "Autogiro" Flight in 1923

June 20, 2011 – Reston, Va. – The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) will designate Getafe Airfield, in Getafe, Spain, as a Historic Aerospace Site. A historic marker will be unveiled on June 21 during a 6:00 p.m. ceremony at the Plaza del Coronel Polanco, in Getafe. The ceremony will be followed by a reception at 7:30 p.m. in the Salón de Grados del Edificio del Rectorado (Building 8) of the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Getafe Campus.

Getafe Airfield was the site of the world's first successful rotorcraft flight, on January 17, 1923. Lieutenant Alejandro Gómez Spencer piloted a C.4 Autogiro designed and built by Juan de la Cierva, who tested a series of autogiros between 1920 and 1924 at the Getafe site. Cierva's autogiros introduced important technologies and flight techniques that led to the development of helicopters and other rotary wing aircraft.

Getafe Air Base, established in 1911, now houses several training and transport units of the Spanish Air Force, as well as two aerospace manufacturing plants.

AIAA established the Historic Aerospace Sites Program in January, 2000, to promote the preservation and dissemination of information about significant accomplishments made in the aerospace profession. In addition to Getafe Airfield, other sites recognized by the AIAA History Technical Committee include the site of T.S.C. Lowe's first balloon reconnaissance demonstration; the Cornell Aeronautical Laboratory/CALSPAC Facility; St. Petersburg Yacht Basin; the Honeysuckle Creek, Tidbinbilla, and Orroral Valley Tracking Stations in Australia; the Downey Industrial Site, Downey, Calif.; NASA Ames Research Center, Moffett Field, Calif.; and Tranquility Base on the moon. For more information about AIAA's Historic Aerospace Sites Program, contact Emily Springer at 703.264.7533 or emilys@aiaa.org.

AIAA is the world's largest technical society dedicated to the global aerospace profession. With more than 35,000 individual members worldwide, and 90 corporate members, AIAA brings together industry, academia, and government to advance engineering and science in aviation, space, and defense. For more information, visit www.aiaa.org.

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