Designs for the tunnel were begun in 1929, with $900,000 of funding appropriated before the Depression. Because the tunnel was designed and built during the Depression, the design team, led by Smith J. DeFrance, was able to take advantage of cheap materials and a large pool of unemployed engineers. Construction began in the spring of 1930 and the completed 30- by 60-Foot Tunnel was dedicated on May 27, 1931.

The overall tunnel is 434 feet long and 222 feet wide with a maximum height of 97 feet. The actual test section is an open-jet 30 feet high, 60 feet wide and 56 feet long. Two four-bladed wooden propellers, each 35.5 feet in diameter and powered by a 4,000-horsepower motor, generate the air stream. The tunnel is a closed-loop design, with two return passages that allow for continuous air flow at speeds up to 120 mph.

Over the years the test section of the tunnel has been modified several times to adapt to changing needs. During renovations in the 1960s and 1970s, the tunnel was equipped for free-flight dynamic model testing. In recent years, the tunnel was extensively used for such free-flight tests. This test technique, unique to this facility, involved flying 10- to 20-percent scaled models controlled by remotely-positioned pilots.

The future of the 30- by 60-Foot Tunnel is uncertain, but there are no plans to tear it down or to change its external appearance. Possible adaptive uses are under study and certain components may be made available to the National Air and Space Museum (Smithsonian) or other museums. NASA Langley is a federal custodian of historic properties, in conformance with the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act.

- end -

NOTE: A video clip and the following photographs are available to illustrate this release.

(LMAL 30652)	F4U-1 Airplane Tested in the 30- by 60-Foot Tunnel
(L 59-336	Mercury Capsule in the 30- by 60-Foot Tunnel
(NACA 5553)	Vought Corsair Airplane Test in the 30- by 60-Foot Tunnel
(L 87-08104)	Free Flight Testing F-18 in the 30- by 60-Foot Tunnel
(L 95-04049)	Waverider LoFlyte Model in NASA Langley's 30- by 60-Foot Tunnel
(NACA 4655)	Construction of the 30- by 60-Foot Tunnel
(L 89-07075)	Aerial View of the 30- by 60-Foot Tunnel
(L 75-00734)	Supersonic Model in NASA Langley's 30- by 60-Foot Tunnel
(L 81-07333)	VariEze Full Scale Model Tested in the 30- by 60-Foot Tunnel
(L 90-09207)	Free Flight Testing in the 30- by 60-Foot Tunnel
Graphic	The 30- by 60-Foot Tunnel Plan View