

# Space shuttle arrives in NYC; crowds watch in awe (Update)

April 27 2012, By DEEPTI HAJELA , Associated Press

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People watch from the balcony of a building as the space shuttle Enterprise, riding on the back of the NASA 747 Shuttle Carrier Aircraft, cruises over the Hudson river, Friday, April 27, 2012 in New York. Enterprise is eventually going to make its new home in New York City at the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer)

(AP) -- In a city understandably wary of low-flying aircraft, New Yorkers and tourists alike watched with joy and excitement Friday as space shuttle Enterprise sailed over the skyline on its final flight before it becomes a museum piece.

Ten years after 9/11, people gathered on rooftops and the banks of the Hudson River to marvel at the sight of the spacecraft riding piggyback on a modified jumbo jet that flew over the Statue of Liberty and past the skyscrapers along Manhattan's West Side.

"It made me feel empowered. I'm going to start crying," Jennifer Patton, a tourist from Canton, Ohio, said after the plane passed over the cheering crowd on the deck of the aircraft carrier USS Intrepid, the floating air-and-space museum that will be the shuttle's permanent home.

"I just feel like to have a plane fly that low over the Hudson, right past New York City, and to have everyone cheering and excited about it, shows that we don't have fear, that we have a sense of 'This is ours.'"

Onlookers bundled up on the blustery spring day along the piers on the West Side, cameras slung around their necks. The roar of the aircraft could barely be heard over the howling winds. In truth, the camera angles on TV made it seem as if the shuttle was a lot closer to the buildings than it really was.

The low-altitude flight was well-publicized, and few people were caught off-guard. Not one person called 911 to report a low-flying plane, police said.

That's a striking contrast to what happened in 2009 when the Pentagon conducted a photo-op flyover in lower Manhattan by a passenger jet and F-16 fighter. The sight of the aircraft flying past the Statue of Liberty and lower Manhattan's financial district set off a flood of 911 calls and sent office workers rushing into the streets in panic.

On Friday, the jet carrying the shuttle turned east and flew over central Long Island. Nassau County office workers looked out their windows in delight as it passed over the Roosevelt Field Mall, near the spot where

Charles Lindbergh took off for Paris in 1927.

The shuttle then touched down at Kennedy Airport, where a controller radioed: "Welcome to New York, and thanks for the show."

The shuttle will be taken to the Intrepid by barge in June and is scheduled to open to the public in mid-July.

Enterprise never went on an actual space mission; it was a full-scale test vehicle used for flights in the atmosphere and experiments on the ground.

It comes to New York as part of NASA's decision to end the shuttle program after 30 years.

Space shuttle Discovery flew over the nation's capital last week and will end up at the Smithsonian. Endeavor is going to Los Angeles, and Atlantis is staying at Florida's Kennedy Space Center.

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