

Aerospace Education History Events: May

1 May 1960-Pilot Francis Gary Powers and his U-2 spy plane are shot down over the Soviet Union. Powers was taken alive by the Russians and the plane was recovered mostly intact.

4 May 2002-An Executive Airline Services twin-engine BAC 1-11-500 crashes in a densely populated part of Kano, Nigeria killing 148 people. Of the 76 people aboard the aircraft, most of them government officials, only two survived.

5 May 1945-A woman and five children are killed while trying to drag a Japanese high-altitude balloon out of the woods in Lakeview, Oregon. The high-altitude balloon was part of the Japanese plan of attacks on America with either explosives or incendiary devices.

5 May 1961-Launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida, Alan B. Shepard Jr. becomes the first American in space. Shepard's sub-orbital flight lasted 15 minutes and took him 116 miles above the Earth's surface.

6 May 1937-The German airship Hindenburg, the largest airship ever built, explodes in flames at Lakehurst, New Jersey. The Hindenburg was over 800 feet long and had an 8,000 mile range. Of the almost 90 people aboard the airship when it exploded, 36 lost their lives.

9 May 1926-Richard E. Byrd and his co-pilot Floyd Bennett become the first men to fly over the North Pole in a triple-engine Fokker monoplane called Josephine Ford.

9 May 1945-Luftwaffe commander Herman Goering is taken prisoner after turning himself in to the Seventh Army HQ in Bavaria.

9 May 1970-Head of the UAW (United Auto Workers), Walter Reuther dies in an airplane crash. Reuther was 62 years old and had been the top person at the UAW since 1946.

14 May 1973-America's first space station, called Skylab, is successfully launched into orbit around Earth. Eleven days later astronauts Charles Conrad, Joseph Kerwin and Paul Weitz board Skylab to fix a jammed solar panel and stay for 28 days.

15 May 1942-Lt. Ronald Reagan transfers from a cavalry unit to the Army Air Force.

15 May 1941-The jet propelled Gloster-Whittle E 28/39 aircraft flies successfully over Cranwell, England. Test pilot Gerry Sayer flew the E 28/39 at a top speed of 370 miles per hour and an altitude of 25,000 feet.

15 May 1963-Astronaut Gordon Cooper is launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida aboard Friendship 7. Cooper's flight lasted 34 hours in space and made 22 orbits of

Earth. This became the longest American space mission and Cooper became the first astronaut to spend more than a day in space.

16 May 1972-As part of Operation Linebacker, US forces launch air strikes against North Vietnam, bombing the North Vietnamese fuel supply line and pumping stations.

17 May 1943-The crew of the Memphis Belle becomes the first B-17 bomber crew to complete the 25 missions needed to go home to the states.

19 May 1953-Jacqueline Cochran becomes the first woman to break the sound barrier.

20 May 1927-Aviator Charles Lindbergh departs Roosevelt Field on Long Island, New York for his destination of Paris, France.

20 May 1956-The first airborne test of a 15 megaton hydrogen bomb is dropped from a B-52 over the island Namu in the Bikini Atoll in the Pacific Ocean.

20 May 1965-A Pakistan Airways Boeing 707 arriving from Pakistan crashes on landing at the airport in Cairo, Egypt. There were 124 people aboard that were killed. Pilots made many complaints that this particular airport was bad to land at day and night. It had inadequate night landing lights and the runway was sloped.

21 May 1927-Charles Lindbergh lands safely at Le Bourget Field in Paris, France after making the world's first transatlantic solo flight and first flight between New York and Paris. It took Lindbergh 33 ½ hours to accomplish this feat aboard his Ryan Airlines Corporation aircraft, Spirit of St. Louis.

21 May 1932-Amelia Earhart makes a nonstop solo transatlantic flight, being the first person to repeat what Charles Lindbergh did five years previous to the day in 1927. Earhart landed in Ireland after a 2,000 mile flight from Newfoundland.

25 May 1961-President John F. Kennedy announces his goal of sending a man into space and asks for the support of Congress.

25 May 1979-An American Airlines DC-10 crashes and explodes after losing an engine shortly after take-off. Flight 191 left Chicago's O'hare Airport and shortly afterwards crashed at the abandoned Ravenswood Airport. All 277 persons aboard were killed in the crash.

26 May 1991-A Boeing 767 chartered by Lauda-Air crashes into a jungle near Bangkok, Thailand after a computer malfunction of the port engine reverse thruster caused the reverse thrust to engage. All 223 people aboard perished. The aircraft was owned by auto racing great Niki Lauda.

28 May 1987-Matthias Rust, a 19 year old amateur pilot from West Germany departs Helsinki, Finland and flies through more than 400 miles of Soviet airspace before landing

his Cessna aircraft in Red Square near the Kremlin. Rust served 18 months in prison before being released.

30 May 1942-A British one thousand aircraft raid is launched on the German city of Cologne. Operation Millennium drops almost 1,500 tons of bombs on the German city.

30 May 1971-Unmanned US space probe Mariner 9 is launched to gather scientific information of the planet Mars.