

FORECAST OF UPCOMING ANNIVERSARIES -- DECEMBER 2010

80 Years Ago - 1930

December 30: A rocket launched by Dr. Robert H. Goddard in New Mexico reached an altitude of 2,000 feet and a speed of 500 mph.

65 Years Ago - 1945

December 10: Fifty-five German specialists arrived at Fort Bliss, TX, and White Sands Proving Grounds, NM, where they were joined by seven specialists headed by Dr. Wernher von Braun.

50 Years Ago – 1960

December 1: Sputnik 6 launch from Baikonur; unsuccessful reentry.
(Carried Two Dogs: Pchelka & Mushka).

December 4: Explorer S-56 failed to orbit, 4:14 p.m., EST, WFF, VA. Scout launcher. It was the first attempt to place a satellite in orbit using an all-solid propellant launch vehicle and the first orbital attempt made from NASA's Wallops Island facility.

December 7: Discoverer 18 (CORONA Mission 9012) launched by Thor Agena, 3:21 p.m., EST, Vandenberg AFB, CA.

December 15: Atlas Able 5B / Pioneer 31 / Pioneer Z, lunar satellite exploded on launch, 4:11 a.m., EST, Cape Canaveral, Fla.

December 15: Echo 1 commemorative stamp issued, Washington, D.C.

December 19: MR-1A suborbital flight, 11:15 a.m., EST, Cape Canaveral, Fla. The first Mercury-Redstone capsule.

December 20: Discoverer 19 orbited by Thor, 3:37 a.m., EST, Vandenberg AFB, CA. Though part of the CORONA program, Discoverer 19 did not carry a film capsule. It was orbited as a test for the Midas missile-detection system.

45 Years Ago - 1965

December 4: Gemini Titan 7 launched by Titan 2, 2:30 p.m., EST, Cape Canaveral, Fla. Astronauts Frank Borman and James A. Lovell, Jr. on a 14-day mission.

December 6: French 1 (FR 1) launched by Scout, 4:06 p.m., EST, Vandenberg AFB, CA.

December 15: Gemini Titan 6 launched by Titan 2, 8:37 a.m., EST, Cape Canaveral, Fla. Astronauts Walter M. Schirra, Jr. and Thomas P. Stafford; rendezvous mission with GT-7.

December 16: Pioneer 6 launched by Thor Delta, 2:31 a.m., EST, Cape Canaveral, Fla.

40 Years Ago - 1970

December 11: NOAA 1 launched by Thor Delta, (ITOS-A), 6:35 a.m., EST, Cape Canaveral, Fla.

December 12: Explorer 42 (Uhuru, SAS-A) Launched by Scout B, 5:54 a.m., San Marco facility, Kenya.

35 Years Ago – 1975

December 5: DAD launched by Scout. Failed to orbit, 7:35 p.m., PST, Vandenberg AFB, CA.

December 16: China 5 (aka Mao 5). Part of JSSW (Ji Shu Shiyan Weixing or "Technical Test Satellite") series orbited by Feng Bao 1 (Storm) rocket from Shuang Cheng-Tzu.

30 Years Ago - 1980

December 6: Intelsat 5 F-2 orbited by Atlas-Centaur, 6:31 p.m., EST, Cape Canaveral, Fla.

20 Years Ago - 1990

December 2: STS-35 (Space Shuttle *Columbia*) launched from KSC, 1:49 a.m., EST. Crew: Vance D. Brand, Guy S. Gardner, Jeffrey A. Hoffman, John M. "Mike" Lounge, Robert A. R. Parker, Samuel T. Durrance and Ronald A. Parise. Carried ASTRO-1 telescopes for ultraviolet and X-ray astronomy in cargo bay. Landed at Edwards AFB, CA, December 11, 12:54 a.m., EST. Mission Duration: eight days, 23 hours, and five minutes.

December 17: The Advisory Committee on the Future of the U.S. Space Program report (aka the Augustine Report because it was chaired by Norman Augustine, chief executive officer of Martin Marietta) submitted to NASA delineating the need for a balanced space program within a tightly constrained budget.

15 Years Ago - 1995

December 2: Joint ESA-NASA launch of Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (SOHO) from Cape Canaveral Air Station by an Atlas 2AS rocket. It carried three American and nine European instruments to observe the Sun and its corona.

December 7: Galileo released probe into Jupiter's atmosphere.

10 Years Ago - 2000

December 28: Galileo probe performs flyby of Jupiter's moon, Ganymede. December 30: Cassini probe performs flyby of Jupiter.

5 Years Ago - 2005

December 28: GIOVE-A (Galileo In-Orbit Validation Element), a European (ESA) navigational satellite, was launched by a Soyuz-Fregat rocket from Baikonur at 05:19 UTC. It is the first member of a planned fleet of 30 Galileo satellites to operate independent of the American GPS and the Russian GLONASS fleets.