

Key 2012 FAA Anniversaries

85 Years

February 28, 1927: The Aeronautics Branch published in its *Domestic Air News* a list of **the first 57 physicians qualified to give medical examinations for pilot licenses**. Scattered over the United States, these physicians (soon to be known as aviation medical examiners) had been selected and qualified by Aeronautics Branch Medical Director Louis H. Bauer.

March 29, 1927: The Aeronautics Branch issued **Aircraft Type Certificate No. 1** to the Buhl Airster C-A3, a three-place open biplane. The plane had an empty weight of 1,686 pounds and its engine had a horsepower rating of 200.

April 6, 1927: William P. MacCracken, Jr., Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Aeronautics, received **Pilot License No. 1**, a private pilot license, from the Aeronautics Branch. MacCracken thus became the first person to obtain a pilot license from a civilian agency of the U.S. Government. Before accepting License No. 1, MacCracken had offered this honor to Orville Wright, promising to waive the fee and examination. Wright declined because he no longer flew and did not think he needed a Federal license to show that he had been the first man to fly.

June 30, 1927: The Aeronautics Branch announced that its **first airways strip map** was available for purchase: Moline, IL, to Kansas City, MO.

June 30, 1927 The Aeronautics Branch issued Transport License No. 199 to Phoebe Fairgrave Omlie, probably the **first woman to obtain a pilot license from a civilian agency of the U.S. government**. (Other American women had previously received pilot licenses from the Joint Army and Navy Board on Aeronautic Cognizance, which issued civilian flying licenses during 1918-19, as well as from organizations such as the Federation Aeronautique Internationale.) The Aeronautics Branch also issued one of the early aircraft and engine mechanic's licenses to Omlie.

July 1, 1927: Frank Gates Gardner of Norfolk, VA, received the **first Federal aircraft mechanic license**.

75 Years

March 1, 1937: The Bureau of Air Commerce **commissioned the Los Angeles air route traffic control center on this date, followed by the Washington, DC center on April 1 and the Oakland Center on May 15**.

70 Years

Fiscal year, 1942: CAA began a **test program to develop a means of preventing damage to aircraft windshields from collision with birds** in flight.

65 Years

Calendar year, 1947: CAA commissioned **the first very high frequency omnidirectional radio ranges (VORs)**. During 1946, the agency had applied wartime technology on an experimental basis when it converted eight radio range stations on the New York and Chicago airway to VOR omnirange stations. As a result of those tests, CAA adopted the VHF omnirange for standard use and began general installation of the new system in 1947.

60 Years

January 7, 1952: CAA **inaugurated radar departure control procedures** at the Washington air route traffic control center. Use of radar for approach began July 1, 1952.

50 Years

October 21, 1962: FAA Administrator Najeeb Halaby **dedicated the Civil Aeromedical Research Institute's new \$8.5 million custom-designed building** at the Aeronautical Center, Oklahoma City. Key programs continued in the new facility included investigation of such topics as: the "true" age of pilots as opposed to their chronological age; effects of certain prescription drugs on aircrew members; crash-impact survival; methods for selecting trainee controllers, stress experienced by controllers, and the bearing of such stress on the desirability of an early retirement program.

November 17, 1962: Ceremonies marked the **opening of FAA's Dulles International Airport**. Scheduled airline service began two days later. Air carrier operations reached a daily level of 72 by mid-1963, and operations of all types for fiscal 1964 totaled 111,071.

45 Years

April 1, 1967: The **Department of Transportation (DOT) began operations**. At the same time, FAA ceased to be the independent Federal Aviation Agency and became the Federal Aviation Administration, a modal agency within the new Department.

40 Years

July 1, 1972: **New Federal Aviation Regulations (Part 152) prescribing policies and procedures for administering FAA's Airport Development Aid Program (ADAP) and Planning Grant Program (PGP) went into effect**. The new rule included provisions concerning the economic, social, and environmental effects of airport expansion or site selection, as required by the legislation that had established the two programs. FAA required coordination with state, local, and regional agencies on proposed airport construction projects, as well as public hearings on each project.

October 20, 1972: The Federal Labor Relations Council certified **PATCO as the sole bargaining unit for air traffic controllers**.

35 Years

March 3, 1977: FAA published a **rule establishing three "stages" of aircraft noise levels** for subsonic large transport aircraft and subsonic turbojets. Stage 1 aircraft were those that did not meet current noise standards and hence must be modified or replaced according to a previously established schedule. Stage 2 aircraft met the current standards, while Stage 3 aircraft were able to meet the more rigorous noise standards for the next generation of jet transports prescribed by the rule.

30 Years

January 28, 1982: FAA released a **National Airspace System Plan** (NAS Plan or NASP), a comprehensive 20-year blueprint for modernizing the nation's air traffic control and air navigation system. The 450-page document spelled out specific improvements to be made to facilities and equipment to meet the projected demands of air transportation. Key elements of the plan included:

- Computers: FAA would first replace the IBM 9020 computers at the air route traffic control centers with more powerful computers that could use the existing programs or "software packages." The agency would then proceed with development of new software as well as new consoles and displays known as "sector suites."
- Facility consolidation: air route traffic control centers and terminal radar control rooms would be consolidated from approximately 200 into about 60 by the year 2,000. Flight service stations would be consolidated from about 300 into 61 automated facilities.
- Radars: a new secondary radar system would interrogate aircraft transponders on an individual basis, paving the way for automatic "data link" air-ground communications. This Mode S equipment ("S" for "selective address"), in combination with a new generation of Doppler weather radar, would also permit the replacement of the existing primary en route radar system. Primary radar would be retained in terminal areas, however, and be improved with the addition of a separate weather channel.
- Weather services: were to be upgraded by such means as direct pilot access to computer weather data via remote terminals or touchtone telephones. Automated sensors at airports would generate radio broadcasts on surface conditions, improving safety and allowing lower weather minimums for landing.
- The Microwave Landing System (MLS): full production procurement was to be initiated in fiscal 1983, with over 1,250 to be in place before century's end. FAA expected the new equipment to provide precision guidance over a much broader area than the existing Instrument Landing Systems, thus allowing greater operational flexibility.

25 Years

June 7, 1987: The Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority (MWAA) **took over management of National and Dulles airports from FAA.**

June 19, 1987: The Federal Labor Relations Authority **certified the National Air Traffic Controllers Association** (NATCA) as the exclusive representative of all GS-2152 series terminal and center controllers whose primary duty was separation of aircraft.

20 Years

October 14, 1992: A FAA-chartered task force released its **report on a Global Navigation Satellite System using the Global Positioning System (GPS)**. The report concluded that the system offered the greatest opportunity to enhance aviation efficiency and safety since the introduction of radio communications and navigation. To help begin the implementation process, FAA on December 10 released a technical standard order prescribing standards for airborne supplemental navigation equipment using GPS.

October 1992: In response to safety issues relating to aging aircraft, FAA established the Center of Excellence in Computational Modeling of Aircraft Structures as a joint effort with Rutgers University and Georgia Institute of Technology. This was the **first Air Transportation Center of Excellence** created by the agency through a program in which selected institutions received long-term matching grants to conduct research under cooperative agreements.

15 Years

March 27, 1997: FAA initiated **phase 1 of Reduced Vertical Separation Minima (RVSM)** procedures in the North Atlantic. Reducing separation from 2,000 to 1,000 had huge implications for capacity and fuel efficiency in oceanic operations. This was the first reduction of separation over the Atlantic in 40 years.

April 1, 1997: A groundbreaking ceremony for the **world's first full-scale airport pavement test facility** took place at the FAA William J. Hughes Technical Center. FAA and Boeing partnered to create the facility.

10 Years

February 17, 2002: Effective this date, formal responsibility for **aviation security transferred from FAA to TSA**.

May 2002: The Fort Worth Air Traffic Control Center became the **first facility to go operational with the Weather and Radar Processor (WARP)** on the controller displays.

December 14, 2002: The new **Potomac Consolidated TRACON began operations**.

5 Years

December 13, 2007: President Bush signed into law the **Fair Treatment for Experienced Pilots Act** (Public Law 110-135). The law amended federal transportation law to allow a pilot who has attained 60 years of age to serve as a passenger airline pilot until the age of 65, provided that a pilot who has attained age 60 may serve as pilot-in-command on international flights only if there is another pilot in the flight crew who has not yet attained 60 years of age.

1 Year

January 12, 2010: Controllers at the Houston Air Route Traffic Control Center began using **automatic dependent surveillance-broadcast (ADS-B) to manage aircraft flying over the Gulf of Mexico**. Houston was the first of four sites selected to demonstrate ADSB services to go live with the service.

November 22, 2010: FAA issued its **first license permitting the reentry to earth of a privately developed spacecraft** to the Space Exploration Technologies Corporation (SpaceX). The Space X Dragon space capsule launched atop the Falcon 9 rocket on December 8 and returned to earth three hours later. The unmanned flight was a precursor to NASA and SpaceX efforts to provide commercial trips to the International Space Station with cargo and crew.