

FORECAST OF UPCOMING ANNIVERSARIES -- FEBRUARY 2016

110 Years Ago – 1906

February 7: Birthday of Clyde Tombaugh, discoverer of planet Pluto.

85 Years Ago -- 1931

February 2: First official rocket mail, cargo of 102 pieces, launched by Friedrich Schmiedl, Austria.

80 Years Ago -- 1936

February 23: U.S. rocket mail flight, New York to New Jersey, Greenwood Lake.

55 Years Ago -- 1961

February 1: First test launch of Minuteman ICBM.

February 10: Voice message sent from Washington to Woomera, Australia, by way of the Moon. NASA Deputy Administrator Dryden spoke on telephone to Goldstone, Calif., which "bounced" it to the deep space instrumentation station at Woomera. The operation was held as part of the official opening ceremony of the deep space instrumentation facility site in Australia.

February 12: Venus 1 (aka Venera 1) launched by a Modified SS-6 (Sapwood) or Molniya, 0210 UTC, Baikonur, USSR. The first spacecraft to fly by Venus.

February 14: James E. Webb took office as second NASA Administrator.

February 16: Scout launch vehicle makes its first spacecraft launch, the Explorer 9, an Echo-type balloon satellite. Also, the first satellite launch from Wallop's Island, VA.

February 17: Discoverer 20 launched by Thor Agena, 3:23 p.m., EST, Vandenberg AFB.

February 18: Discoverer 21 launched by Thor Agena, 2:58 p.m., EST, Vandenberg AFB.

February 21: Transit III-B, LOFTI-1 launched by Thor, 10:45 p.m., EST, Cape Canaveral, Fla.

February 21: Mercury Atlas-2 (MA-2) launched by an Atlas, 0:12 a.m., EST, Cape Canaveral, Fla. A suborbital test of the Mercury spacecraft.

February 24: Explorer failure, orbit not achieved, Explorer S-45 launched aboard a Juno 2 rocket, 7:13 p.m., EST, Cape Canaveral, Fla.

February 24: Jodrell Bank transmits radio signals from the surface of the Moon that are received in Sydney, Australia.

50 Years Ago -- 1966

February 3: Luna 9 soft landed on moon and sent first radio television transmission to Earth. Launched January 31, 1146 UTC, Baikonur, USSR.

February 3: ESSA-1 launched by Thor Delta, 2:41 a.m., EST, Cape Canaveral, Fla.

February 26: Apollo Saturn 201 lifted off at 11:12 a.m., EST, Cape Canaveral, Fla. Suborbital flight of Apollo spacecraft block I and Saturn IB launch vehicle.

February 28: ESSA-2 launched by Thor Delta, 8:48 a.m., EST, Cape Canaveral, Fla.

45 Years Ago --1971

February 2: NATO 2, a military communications satellite, was launched by a Delta, 8:41 p.m., EST, Cape Canaveral, Fla.

February 16: Tansei 1, a technological test satellite, was launched by an M-4S, 0400 UTC, from the Kagoshima Space Center, Japan.

35 Years Ago --1981

February 21: Comstar D-4 launched, 6:23 p.m., EST, Cape Canaveral, Fla.

30 Years Ago --1986

February 19: MIR Space Station launched by Proton Booster Plus Upper Stage from Baikonur at 21:28:23 UTC.

25 Years Ago --1991

February 7: Salyut 7 space station re-entered Earth's atmosphere at 04:00 UTC.

20 Years Ago -- 1996

February 17: NEAR (Near Earth Asteroid Rendezvous) launched from Cape Canaveral by a Delta 2 rocket at 3:43 EST. to orbit around a major asteroid, Eros which it encountered on February 14, 2000. On Monday, 12 February 2001, the NEAR spacecraft touched down on asteroid Eros, after transmitting 69 close-up images of the surface during its final descent.

February 21: Soyuz TM-23 launched from Baikonur at 12:34 UTC, carrying two cosmonauts (Yuri Onufrienko, Yuri Usachev). It docked with the MIR station at 14:24 UTC on February 23.

February 22: STS-75 (Space Shuttle *Columbia*) launched at 3:18: pm EST, KSC. Crew: Andrew M. Allen, Scott J. Horowitz, Franklin R. Chang-Diaz, Maurizio Cheli (Italy), Jeffrey A. Hoffman, Claude Nicollier (Switzerland), and Umberto Guidoni (Italy). Carried the Tethered Satellite System Reflight (TSS-1R) into orbit and deployed it spaceward on a conducting tether. Also flew the United States Microgravity Payload (USMP-3) designed to investigate materials science and condensed matter physics. Landed March 9 at 8:58 a.m., EST, KSC. Mission Duration: 15 days, 17 hours, 41 minutes.

February 24: Polar spacecraft, part of the International Solar Terrestrial Physics Project (ISTP) launched by a Delta 2 rocket from Vandenberg AFB at 11:24 UTC to measure polar magnetospheric hot plasma and to map auroral displays.

15 Years Ago - 2001

February 7: STS-98 (Space Shuttle *Atlantis*) launched at 6:13 pm EST from KSC. Crew: Kenneth D. Cockrell, Mark L. Polansky, Robert L. Curbeam, Thomas D. Jones, and Marsha S. Ivins. Carried the Destiny module to the International Space Station (ISS). Landed February 20 at 3:34 p.m., EST at Edwards Air Force Base, California. Mission Duration: 12 days, 21 hours, 21 min.

February 12: NEAR spacecraft touched down on asteroid Eros.

5 Years Ago - 2011

February 16: Europe's ATV 2 (Automated Transfer Vehicle 2) or Kepler resupply vehicle launched from Kourou at 21:51 UT by an Ariane 5 rocket. The craft docked with the International Space Station's (ISS) *Zvezda* service module on February 24 at 15:59 UT.

February 24: STS 133 (Space Shuttle *Discovery*) launched at 4:53 pm from KSC. Crew: Steven W. Lindsey, Eric A. Boe, Michael R. Barratt, Stephen G. Bowen, Nicole P. Stott, and Alvin Drew. Shuttle *Discovery* docked with the International Space Station's (ISS) *Harmony* module on 26 February 2011 at 19:14 UT. The mission was the 39th and final flight of *Discovery* and the 133rd flight of the Space Shuttle program. The primary goals of the shuttle mission were to deliver critical spare parts and deliver Robonaut 2, the first humanoid robot in space. Landed March 9, 2011 at 11:57 a.m. EST at KSC. Mission Duration: 12 days, 19 hours, 4 minutes.