FORECAST OF UPCOMING ANNIVERSARIES -- FEBRUARY 2018

70 Years Ago – 1948
February 4: First flight of Douglas D-558-II, Number 1, Dryden Flight Research Facility (DFRF), CA.

65 Years Ago – 1953
February 21: First powered flight of Bell X-1A.

60 Years Ago - 1958
February 4: President Eisenhower asks James Killian, head of the President’s Scientific Advisory Council (PSAC), to chair a study on how the U.S. space and missile programs should be organized. Concept for NASA results from study.

55 Years Ago - 1963
February 9: First flight of Boeing 727, Seattle, WA.

February 14: Syncom 1 launched by Thor Delta, 12:35 a.m., EST, Cape Canaveral, Fla. First communications satellite placed in geosynchronous orbit. Communications with satellite lost shortly after it achieves orbit.

50 Years Ago - 1968
February 19: Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC) fires its 1,000th sounding rocket, an Aerobee 150 carrying X-ray detection instruments launched from White Sands Missile Range (WSMR).

February 20: Surveyor VII ceases operations.

45 Years Ago – 1973
February 6: Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC) forms the Large Space Telescope Task Force to plan for and create a preliminary design of a Large Space Telescope (LST). It would be launched by the Space Shuttle in 1990 as the Hubble Space Telescope (HST).

February 15: Pioneer 10 crosses the asteroid belt without damage and becomes the world’s farthest travelling spacecraft.

40 Years Ago – 1978
February 9: FLTSATCOM 1 launched by Atlas-Centaur at 4:17 p.m. from Cape Canaveral, Fla. First US satellite designed exclusively for worldwide military communications.

35 Years Ago – 1983
February 1: NASA transfers control of Landsat operations to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Previously considered an experimental system, the transfer indicated Landsat had reached operational maturity.

February 9: Department of Defense (DoD) triple launched US Navy Ocean Surveillance Satellites (NOSS) into low polar orbit at 5:47 a.m. PST by Atlas F rocket, Vandenberg AFB. NOSS consisted of a cluster of one primary satellite and three smaller sub-satellites that trailed behind the primary at distances of several hundred kilometers.

30 Years Ago – 1988
February 11: President Reagan issued a revised space policy with increased emphasis on developing the commercial space sector following the Challenger (STS-51L) accident.

25 Years Ago – 1993
February 20: Launch of Asuka, known also as ASTRO-D and ASCA, aboard a M-3SII from Uchinoura Space Center, Japan at 2:20 a.m. UTC. ASCA was an X-ray astronomy satellite.
20 Years Ago – 1998
February 10: Celestis 2 launched by Taurus rocket, a commercial venture for disposal of funeral ashes in space. As designed, the payload disintegrated with launch vehicle on reentry.

February 25: Student Nitric Oxide Explorer (SNOE) launched by Pegasus XL dropped from a L-1011 aircraft flying out of Vandenberg AFB at 11:07 p.m. PST. SNOE was the first launch of the Student Explorer Demonstration Initiative (STEDI) program, designed to possibility of creating science satellites within a university budget.

15 Years Ago – 2003
February 1: After a 16-day mission, the Space Shuttle Columbia began its reentry but broke apart over western Texas at 9:00 a.m. EST when the shuttle was at an altitude of 60 km with a speed of 20,100 km/hr. The crew did not survive. It was Columbia’s 28th mission. Following an extensive investigation, the Columbia Accident Investigation Board identified the primary reason for the accident: damage caused by foam insulation falling off the External Tank (ET) and striking the leading edge of Columbia’s left wing. The agency successfully returned the Shuttle to flight on July 26, 2005 with the launch of STS-114, and retired the Shuttle in 2011 with no further accidents.

10 Years Ago – 2008
February 7: STS 122 (Space Shuttle Atlantis) launched, 2:45 p.m., EST, KSC. Crew: Hans Schlegel, Stanley G. Love, Stephen N. Frick, Alan G. Poindexter, Leland D. Melvin, and Rex J. Walheim. The primary goal of the mission was to carry the European (ESA) laboratory Columbus to the ISS and install it. It docked with the ISS at 12:25 p.m., EST on February 9. Atlantis landed Feb. 20, 9:07 a.m. EST, KSC. Mission Duration: 13 days.

February 20: The U.S. Navy successfully destroyed a wayward satellite, USA-193, with a heat-seeking missile over the Pacific Ocean at 10:26 p.m. The satellite was destroyed to prevent an uncontrolled reentry as it contained a large amount of frozen toxic hydrazine fuel that could survive the breakup of the satellite and prove to be hazardous. The NRO spy satellite, also known as NROL-21, was launched into orbit Dec. 14, 2006.

5 Years Ago – 2013
February 11: Landsat 8 launched by Atlas V rocket at 10:02 a.m. PST, Vandenberg AFB. The satellite is the eighth in a series of earth observation satellites which provided continuous data on human land usage for over 30 years.