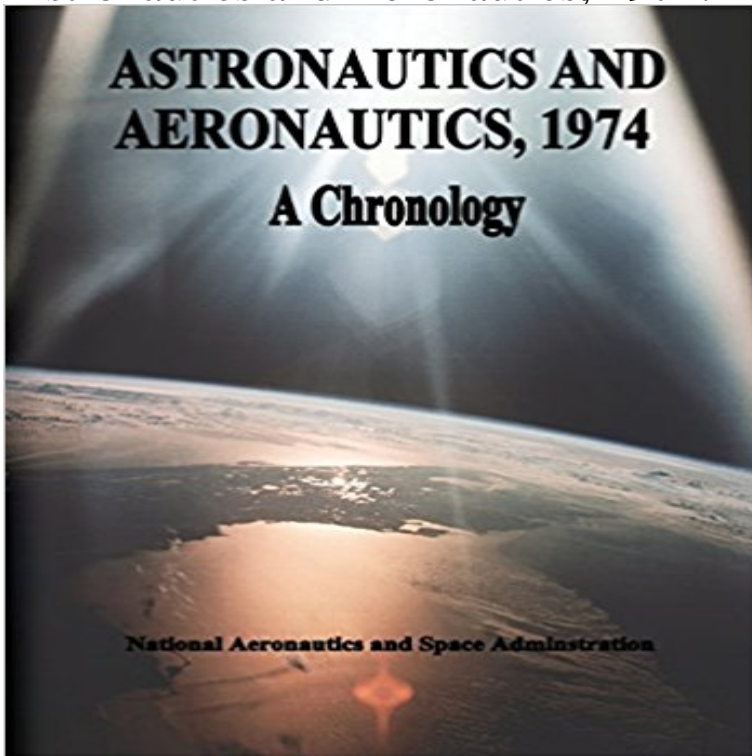


Astronautics and Aeronautics, 1974: A Chronology



This chronological collection of aeronautical and space events of 1974 shows that the emphasis in technology has shifted from the problems of how to operate in air and space to the practical use of those environments to meet human needs. Although the immediate use of technology was emphasized in 1974, NASA also looked to the future. In NASA's 1974 total, 11 spacecraft were paid for by non-NASA users; 10 were international. In addition, two Italian launches used NASA launch vehicles. Operational satellites—all of whose costs, including launch costs, were paid for by others—included six for communications, two of them the first U.S. domestic communications satellites and four for other nations or international groups. And a new operational weather satellite joined the network that reports data from pole to pole. Meanwhile, new technology for improved services was pursued: NASA launched the first Synchronous Meteorological Satellite, for continuous day-and-night weather monitoring, and orbited an experimental communications satellite for France and West Germany. NASA's Applications Technology Satellite demonstrated a new use for powerful communications satellites, transmitting educational courses and health services to small low-cost receivers in remote areas. And remote sensing by satellite and aircraft, though still experimental, found increasing use around the globe for monitoring the earth's geology, ecology, resources, and pollution. NASA continued the systematic exploration of the solar system and the observation of the universe in 1974. Studies of the sun, the planets, and the stars added to knowledge of atmospheric processes, geological formations, energy sources, and physical laws that affect the earth. Three planetary probes launched in previous years gave us the first close look at Mercury, new clues to the origin and

evolution of Venus, and new information on the weather, atmosphere, and radiation belts of Jupiter. Jupiter was found to be a ball of liquid hydrogen, its great red spot a gigantic cluster of storms at least 400 years old. These Mariner and Pioneer probes were sweeping on toward further planetary investigations even as preparations continued for future probes to softland on Mars and to fly past Jupiter, Saturn, and Venus. Scientific satellites of the earth, sounding rockets, balloons, and aircraft were used to study spectra of the stars, celestial x-ray and gamma ray sources, and the earth's own atmosphere and magnetic field and interaction with the solar wind. Manned space flight continued to demonstrate man's capability to live and work in space. Skylab 4, man's longest mission to date, extended into 1974. The Apollo-Soyuz Test Project neared readiness for its mid-1975 U.S.-U.S.S.R. flight to test compatible docking systems and conduct joint experiments in space. Development of the first true space transportation system moved nearer its goal of a reusable space shuttle and reusable space laboratory, as the shuttle reached test and fabrication stages and the European Space Research Organization awarded the prime contract for its contribution, Spacelab, to be carried into orbit and back in the shuttle. Aeronautical research was reoriented, with more emphasis placed on reducing both the amount of energy required for transportation and the pollution produced by transportation. NASA sought new solutions for the problem of noise, pollution, and safety, while experimenting with alternate fuels and composite materials. Flight tests began on a new general-aviation wing, the GAW-1, and the X-24B lifting body tested maneuverability and landing abilities of a vehicle designed for reentry from space. NASA made advances toward low-cost production of solar cells to convert sunlight into electricity and demonstrated the use of solar energy to cool and heat houses. Wind-driven electric generators and ways to reduce fuel consumption and pollution

by cars were other targets of research during the year.

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