

25 Years Ago, October 1981



Oct. 16 The McDonnell Douglas AV-8B Advanced Harrier V/STOL aircraft is officially rolled out from its factory building and will be delivered to the Patuxent River, Md., Naval Air Station for tests. The AV-8B features a larger, all-composite wing that will allow the attack jet to carry 9,200 lb of ordnance—almost twice the bomb load of the earlier AV-8A. *Aviation Week*, Oct. 26, 1981, pp. 18-19.

Oct. 30 The USSR's Venera 13 is launched toward the planet Venus. NASA, *Astronautics and Aeronautics, 1979-84*, p. 593.

50 Years Ago, October 1956

Oct. 1 The new Terrapin high-altitude two-stage solid-propellant rocket, developed by the University of Maryland and Republic Aviation, climbs 80 mi. after launch from NACA Wallops Island, Va. *Aircraft Year Book 1956*, p. 389.

Oct. 1 Richard T. Whitcomb receives the NACA Distinguished Service Medal for developing the area rule. Application of this rule, first employed in the Convair F-102 Delta Dagger and widely adopted later, significantly reduces drag rise of aircraft at transonic and supersonic speeds. *U.S. Air Services*, Oct. 1956, p. 20.



Oct. 9 Northrop Aircraft receives a \$26-million contract to develop the SM-62 Snark intercontinental missile. *Aircraft Year Book 1956*, p. 390.

Oct. 10 Raytheon gets a \$60-million contract for production of the Sparrow air-to-air missile. Although developed for the Navy, the Sparrow becomes the primary medium-range air-to-air weapon of both the Air Force and the fleet. *Aircraft Year Book 1956*, p. 390.



Oct. 10 The Douglas A4D Skyhawk enters service with the Navy. Nicknamed "Heinemann's Hot Rod" after its prolific designer Edward H. Heinemann, the diminutive Skyhawk soon proves one of the finest attack planes ever built, seeing action over Vietnam and the Middle East. R. Francillon, *McDonnell Douglas Aircraft Since 1920*, pp. 513-530.

Oct. 11 As part of Operation Buffalo, an RAF Vickers Valiant jet bomber drops the first British atomic weapon from an aircraft over Maralinga, South Australia. *Flight*, Oct. 19, p. 632.

Oct. 15 The last Avro Lancaster is retired from the RAF. This truly remarkable four-engine bomber entered service in 1941. It went on to distinguish itself as the backbone of the RAF Bomber Command during WW II. Modified versions of the "Lanc" sank the German battleship Tirpitz and destroyed the Eder and Moehne dams in the Ruhr Valley. *Flight*, Oct. 25.



Oct. 20 Lawrence Bell, founder of Bell Aircraft, dies in Buffalo, N.Y., at age 62. Bell also developed the first American jet, the XP-59, and the world's first plane to fly faster than the speed of sound, the X-1. He began his aeronautical career as a mechanic in 1911. Between 1913 and 1928 he rose from superintendent to vice president and general manager for Glenn L. Martin. He held senior positions with Consolidated until 1935, when he left to form his own corporation. *Flight*, Oct. 26, p. 665.



Oct. 25 McDonnell Aircraft receives a Navy contract for \$58 million worth of additional F3H-2N Demon all-weather jet fighters. *Aircraft Year Book 1956*, p. 390.

Oct. 29 The widely read journal *Aviation Week* publishes an announcement, originally printed in the *Moscow News*, that the USSR will launch its first artificial satellite. It is to be an aluminum sphere measuring 20-24 in. in diameter and weighing almost 100 lb. This is but one of several similar early reports from Moscow. Yet when Sputnik 1 is launched about a year later, it is still a shock to scientists and laymen alike. The two publications' descriptions of the planned satellite turn out to be remarkably close to Sputnik 1. *Aviation Week*, Oct. 29, 1956, p. 62.

Oct. 31 Convair announces that it has begun taxiing tests of its new Mach-2 delta-wing B-58 Hustler high-altitude bomber. *Aircraft Year Book 1956*, p. 390.

Oct. 31 At 4:30 p.m. GMT, Egypt is attacked by British, French, and Israeli aircraft as the Suez Crisis explodes into open warfare. This brief war marks the introduction of jet aircraft into the continuing confrontations in the Middle East. *Flight*, Nov. 19, p. 742.

And During October 1956

—Westinghouse Electric unveils its Paraballoon, a radically new kind of radar antenna that can be inflated or deflated like a balloon. The 30-ft-diam vinyl-coated fiberglass device is a major breakthrough, weighing only 1,700 lb vs. 10,000 lb for a conventional ground antenna. It is also more portable and far faster to assemble. *Aviation Week*, Oct. 22, 1956, p. 94.

75 Years Ago, October 1931



Junkers Ju 49

Oct. 2 A Junkers Ju 49 using an 800-hp Junkers L.88 engine is tested at Dessau, Germany, in preparation for experimental high-altitude flights. Features that equip it for high-altitude work include an air-tight compartment and superchargers. The pilot reports that the machine handles very well. *Flight*, Oct. 9, 1931.

Oct. 2 Col. Charles Lindbergh and his wife Anne Morrow Lindbergh conduct flood relief flights over China's Yangtse River region in their Lockheed Sirius seaplane. Upon taking off for a survey flight to Tun Ting Lake, the plane capsizes and they are thrown into the river. A boat from the British aircraft carrier *Hermes* soon rescues them. The carrier hoists the plane aboard and takes it to Shanghai for repairs. The *Hermes* also assists in the flood relief work, although the Chinese have forbidden the use of British aircraft. *Flight*, Oct. 9, 1931.

Oct. 5 Clyde Pangborn and Hugh Herndon make the first nonstop flight across the Pacific from Japan to the U.S. in their 420-hp Pratt & Whitney Wasp-powered Bellanca monoplane, named *Miss Veedol*. They leave from Sabushiro Beach, Japan, on Oct. 3 and land at Wenatchee, Wash.



Japan's Asahi Publishing awards them \$25,000 for the feat. Originally, Pangborn and Herndon were making a round-the-world flight in their single-engine plane, but when they arrived in Japan from the Soviet Union, they were arrested for inadvertently photographing and flying over restricted Japanese military territory. U.S. diplomats in Japan gained their release. *The Aeroplane*, Oct. 7, 1931.

Oct. 12 First Lady Lou Hoover christens the Sikorsky S-40 American Clipper, flagship of Pan American Airways, in ceremonies at the Anacostia Naval Air Station in Washington, D.C. The S-40 amphibian will open Pan Am's international line from Miami, Fla., to Central and South America, as far as Buenos Aires. Clipper service with a variety of aircraft later links the U.S. with every country but two in the Western Hemisphere and is a landmark in international aviation. The S-40 also serves as the flagship of the U.S. international air mail fleet. This is the first airliner in the Pan Am fleet to bear the name Clipper. *U.S. Air Services*, Nov. 1931, pp. 16-18.



Oct. 15 Varney Speed Lines inaugurates a fast passenger service between San Francisco and Los Angeles. Using high-speed Lockheed Orions, Varney covers the 37-mi. route in 1 hr 58 min. *Aviation*, Dec. 1931.

Oct. 27 Following brief ceremonies at the Lakehurst Naval Air Station, N.J., the Navy formally accepts the airship USS Akron from Goodyear Zeppelin. Lt. Cdr. Charles Rosendahl takes command and completes final tests on Oct. 18 during a 200-mi. trip over several Midwestern states. The Akron, officially designated the ZRS-4, has a capacity of 6,500,000 ft³ of helium. *Aviation*, Dec. 1931, p. 669.

Oct. 28 Austrian rocket pioneer Friedrich Schmiedl continues mail rocket experiments by sending his V8 rocket from Grazerfeld, Austria, on his first night rocket flight. The rocket carries specially printed cards and letters. J. Ellington and P. Zwisler, eds., *Ellington-Zwisler Rocket Mail Catalog, 1904-1967*.

100 Years Ago, October 1906

Oct. 23 The Brazilian Alberto Santos-Dumont achieves the first of his powered flights in Europe with his 14-bis, a box kite apparatus powered by a 50-hp Antoinette engine. This effort is sufficient to win him the Archdeacon Prize. He then adds octagonal ailerons and continues the experiments. His best effort is a flight of 721 ft performed in 21 sec, enabling him to capture the Aero Club's 1,500-franc prize. This modest feat is thus hailed as the first official flight in Europe. C. Gibbs-Smith, *Flight*, pp. 120, 243.

