



PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

Anniversaries of aviation and space achievements to celebrate in 2021

Lausanne, Switzerland, 1 February 2021 – In 2021, FAI will put the spotlight on the most remarkable records ratified by the Federation, and on the striking feats that have marked the history of aviation and space exploration.

By celebrating the anniversaries of these achievements, FAI also wants to commemorate the women and men who pushed the limits of technology and human potential to conquer the sky and explore space.

Sixty years ago, in April 1961, Yuri Gagarin became the first human to orbit the Earth and established three records after submitting a detailed file to FAI for ratification. He was followed less than a month later by Alan Shepard, the first American to travel into space, who broke two records in the process. Ten years later in 1971, the Soviet Union placed the world's first space station in earth orbit, Salyut 1.

Air sports will also have their fair share of firsts and records to remember, starting as far back as 1871, when brilliant engineer Alphonse Pénaud created the “Planophore”, a model aircraft powered by a twisted rubber band which marked a significant milestone in the flight research. Fast-forwarding through more than 140 years of technology development to 2016, Walter Extra broke records in his electric-powered plane and Bertrand Piccard flew from New York to Seville aboard an aircraft solely using the energy of the sun.

During the 20th century, societal progress opened the doors of aviation to women. In 1911, Harriet Quimby became the first woman in the US to earn an aeroplane pilot license. In 1951, FAI approved its first parachuting records, which were set by Frenchwoman Monique Laroche. Passionate athletes of both genders helped this sport evolve throughout the years, which now includes new disciplines such as speed skydiving, in which Henrik Raimer reached 601,26 km/h in 2016.

In ballooning, FAI will celebrate an array of spectacular records anniversaries, from Auguste Piccard's ascension into the stratosphere in 1931 to Fedor Konyukhov's shortest flight around the world in 2016.

Exceptional achievements could not happen without strong friendship and efficient teamwork, as demonstrated by Rafael Monteiro Saladini, Rafael de Moraes Barros and Marcelo Prieto who flew together to break simultaneous paragliding records in 2019.

Full list of records and achievements

Date	Name	Country	Category	Description	World record(s)
12 April 1961	GAGARIN Yuri*	URS	Space	1st man to travel to space	3 records , incl. 9327 - current
19 April 1971		URS	Space	The Soviet Union placed the world's first space station in earth orbit, Salyut 1	-
4 May 1961	ROSS Malcolm D.	USA	Ballooning	Absolute altitude (34668m)	2 records , incl. 2325 - current
5 May 1961	SHEPARD Alan	USA	Space	1st American to travel to space	2 records , incl. 9519 - current

25 May 2011	EIMERS Wilhelm	GER	Ballooning	Duration record - 23h 18m 30s	16259 - current
27 May 1931	PICCARD Auguste*	SUI	Ballooning	1st balloon flight into the stratosphere Altitude record (15781m)	10634
23 June 2016	PICCARD Bertrand	SUI	Experimental / New Technologies	Non-stop flight from New York to Sevilla aboard Solar Impulse (5851,3km)	4 records, incl. 17868 - current
23 July 2016	KONYUKHOV Fedor*	RUS	Ballooning	Absolute record, Shortest time around the world (268h 20m)	4 records, incl. 17899 - current
2 August 1911	QUIMBY Harriet	USA	Powered airplanes	1st American woman to earn an airplane pilot license	-
18 August 1871	PÉNAUD Alphonse	FRA	Aeromodelling	1st public flight of his Planophore	-
13 September 2016	RAIMER Henrik	SWE	Parachuting	Speed skydiving (601,26km/h)	17941
6 October 1951	LAROCHE Monique*	FRA	Parachuting	1st parachuting records	2 records
10 October 2019	MONTEIRO SALADINI Rafael / DE MORAES BARROS Rafael / PRIETO Marcelo	BRA	Paragliding	Straight distance record (582km)	2 records, Saladini / Barros / Prieto - current
12 November 1981	ABRUZZO Ben*	USA	Ballooning	1st crossing of the Pacific Ocean in a balloon Absolute distance record (8382,54km)	3 records, incl. 2326
19 November 1991	DABADIE Guy	FRA	Rotorcraft	Absolute Speed over a course of 3km (372km/h)	3 records, incl. 11658 - current
25 November 2016	EXTRA Walter	GER	Powered Aircraft	Time to climb to a height of 3000m record in an electric-powered aircraft (4m 22s)	18085 - current

* Press releases will be sent out ahead of these anniversaries.

Notes for editors

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About FAI

FAI, the World Air Sports Federation, is the world governing body for air sports and for certifying world aviation and space records. The FAI was founded in 1905 and is a non-governmental and non-profit-making organisation recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

FAI activities include Aerobatics, Aeromodelling, Airships, Amateur-Built and Experimental Aircraft, Ballooning, Drones, Gliding, Hang Gliding, Helicopters, Manpowered Flying, Microlights, Paragliding, Paramotors, Power Flying, Skydiving and all other Aeronautic activities and Space records.

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