

Nasa's 50 Year Proceedings

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On 29 July 1958. President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the National Aeronautics and Space Act, creating the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), which became operational on 1 October of that year. Over the next 50 years, NASA achieved a set of spectacular feats, ranging from advancing the well-established field of aeronautics to pioneering the new fields of Earth and space science and human spaceflight. In the midst of the geopolitical context of the Cold War, 12 Americans walked on the Moon, arriving in peace "for all mankind." Humans saw their home planet from a new perspective, with unforgettable Apollo images of Earthrise and the "Blue Marble," as well as the "pale blue dot" from the edge of the solar system. A flotilla of spacecraft has studied Earth, while other spacecraft have proved the depths of the solar system and the universe beyond. In the 1980s, the evolution of aeronautics gave us the first winged human spacecraft, the Space Shuttle, and the International Space Station stands as a symbol of human cooperation in space as well as a possible way station to the stars. With the Apollo fire and two Space Shuttle accidents, NASA has also seen the depths of tragedy.

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