

This Week in History

Here are some noted happenings during this week over the years:

February 6

- 1996 The crash of a Boeing 757 aircraft leaves no survivors. Birgenair Flight 301 was the worst accident involving this type of aircraft.
- 1989 The Round Table Talks start in Poland. The negotiations between the Polish government and the trade union Solidarność, or Solidarity in English, marked the beginning of the end of communism in Eastern Europe.
- 1959 The first microchip is patented. For his invention of the integrated circuit, Jack Kilby was awarded the 2000 Nobel Prize in Physics.
- 1952 Elizabeth II becomes Queen of the United Kingdom. She succeeded her father, George VI, who died that day.
- 1840 New Zealand becomes a British colony. While the Treaty of Waitangi is generally celebrated as the country's founding document, many Māori claim they were deceived and unwittingly stripped of their right to govern the country.

Births On This Day – 1950 Natalie Cole, American singer-songwriter, actress; 1945 Bob Marley, Jamaican/American singer-songwriter, guitarist; 1911 Ronald Reagan, American actor, politician, 40th President of the United States; 1895 Babe Ruth, American baseball player; 1665 Anne, Queen of Great Britain.

Deaths On This Day – 2011 Gary Moore, Irish singer-songwriter, guitarist, producer; 2007 Frankie Laine, American singer-songwriter, actor; 1918 Gustav Klimt, Austrian painter, graphic artist.

February 7

- 2009 The Black Saturday bushfires in Australia kill 173 people. The fires were the worst natural disaster in Australian history.
- 2005 Ellen MacArthur breaks the speed record for sailing solo around the world. The journey took her 71 days, 14 hours, 18 minutes, and 33 seconds.
- 1992 The European Union is established as the Maastricht Treaty is signed. The treaty also defined a single European currency: the Euro.
- 1986 Haiti's president, Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, flees the country, ending 28 years of family rule. On the same day 5 years later, the first democratically elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was sworn in.
- 1984 NASA astronauts take the first untethered spacewalk. The photographs of Bruce McCandless and Robert L. Stewart hovering freely in space became some of the most iconic images of the 1980s.

Births On This Day – 1978 Ashton Kutcher, American model, actor, producer; 1962 Eddie Izzard, Yemeni/English actor, comedian; 1962 Garth Brooks, American singer-songwriter, guitarist; 1906 Oleg Antonov, Soviet aircraft designer, founded the Antonov Aircraft Company; 1812 Charles Dickens, English author.

Deaths On This Day – 2015 Dean Smith, American basketball player, coach; 1959 Nap Lajoie, American baseball player; 1938 Harvey Samuel Firestone, American businessman, founded the Firestone Tire, Rubber Company.

February 8

- 1971 The NASDAQ holds its first trading day. The National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations was the world's first electronic stock exchange.
- 1960 The first 8 stars are added to the Hollywood Walk of Fame. More than 2400 five-pointed stars have since been embedded in the sidewalks of Hollywood Boulevard and Vine Street to honor stars of the entertainment industry.
- 1950 The Stasi, East Germany's notorious secret police, is established. The "Staatssicherheit", which was dissolved in 1990, is considered one of the most repressive intelligence agencies in the world.
- 1910 The Boy Scouts of America is founded. 3 years earlier, British General Robert Baden-Powell had founded the Scout movement in England.
- 1879 Sandford Fleming proposes the use of time zones. The later introduction of the Universal Standard Time, which is based on time zones, revolutionized time keeping.

Births On This Day – 1941 Nick Nolte, American actor; 1932 John Williams, American pianist, composer, conductor; 1931 James Dean, American actor; 1925 Jack Lemmon, American actor, singer, director; 1828 Jules Verne, French author.

Deaths On This Day – 2007 Ian Stevenson, American biochemist; 2007 Anna Nicole Smith; 1587 Mary, Queen of Scots.

February 9

- 1996 The Irish paramilitary organization IRA ends an 18-month ceasefire by exploding a large bomb in London. The explosion in London's Canary Wharf left 2 people dead and 39 injured.
- 1969 The Boeing 747 flies for the first time. The "Jumbo Jet" was the world's largest passenger aircraft at the time.
- 1964 The Beatles embark on their first tour in the United States. Their appearance in the Ed Sullivan Show marked the beginning of the "British Invasion"
- 1959 The world's first intercontinental ballistic missile becomes operational in the USSR. The Soviet R-7 Semyorka missile had a range of 8800 km (5500 mi).
- 1950 U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy launches his anti-communist campaign. On this day, McCarthy accused the U.S. State Department of being infiltrated by communists.

Births On This Day – 1942 Carole King, American singer-songwriter, pianist; 1846 Wilhelm Maybach, German businessman, founded Maybach; 1737 Thomas Paine, English/American theorist, author.

Deaths On This Day – 1981 Bill Haley, American singer-songwriter, musician.

February 10

- 2009 Two satellites collide in space. Both the U.S. satellite "Iridium 33" and the Russian "Kosmos 2251" were destroyed in the accident.

- 1996 Deep Blue becomes the first computer to win a chess game against a reigning world champion. Despite his defeat in the first game, Russian world champion Garry Kasparov proceeded to win the match by 4-2 games.
- 1964 Dylan's released the album "The Times They Are A-Changin'" is released. The title track is one of Dylan's best-known songs.
- 1962 Francis Gary Powers, a U.S. spy captured by the Soviet Union, is released. Powers was exchanged for captured Soviet spy, Rudolf Ivanovich Abel.
- Births On This Day – 1929 Jerry Goldsmith, American composer, conductor; 1744 William Cornwallis, English Admiral.
- Deaths On This Day – 2005 Arthur Miller, American playwright.

February 11

- 1990 Nelson Mandela is freed after 27 years as a political prisoner. The anti-apartheid campaigner's release was a high point in South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy.
- 1979 Ayatollah Khomeini seizes power in Iran. Few days after Khomeini's triumphant return from French exile, the Iranian army steps aside, making way for the creation of an Islamic theocracy.
- 1975 Margaret Thatcher becomes the first female leader of the British Conservative Party. Thatcher won the general elections in 1979 and became Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.
- 1938 The BBC broadcasts Karel Čapek's "R.U.R.", the world's first science fiction TV program. The Czech play whose abbreviated title stands for "Rossum's Universal Robots" introduced the word "robot" to the English language.
- 1858 Bernadette Soubirou sees a vision of the Virgin Mary near Lourdes. The small town in southern France became one of the most important Christian places of pilgrimage.

Births On This Day – 1969 Jennifer Aniston, American actress, director, producer; 1964 Sarah Palin, American politician, 9th Governor of Alaska; 1934 Manuel Noriega, Panamanian general, politician, Military Leader of Panama; 1926 Leslie Nielsen, Canadian/American actor; 1847 Thomas Edison, American businessman, invented the light bulb, phonograph.

Deaths On This Day – 2012 Whitney Houston, American singer, actress, producer, model; 1963 Sylvia Plath, American poet; 1650 René Descartes, French philosopher, mathematician.

February 12

- 2002 The trial of Slobodan Milošević begins at The Hague. The former President of Yugoslavia and Serbia died 4 years later, before the trial's conclusion.
- 1994 Edvard Munch's "The Scream" is shown. The iconic painting, one of a series of four, was recovered several months later.
- 1924 George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" premieres. The piece is among Gershwin's best-known compositions and one of the most popular pieces of the symphonic jazz genre.
- 1912 The last Emperor of China abdicates at the age of 6. Puyi was expelled from the Forbidden City after a military coup in 1924. He died on October 17, 1967 aged 61.
- 1909 The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is founded in the U.S. The NAACP is one of the oldest and most influential civil rights organizations in the United States.

Births On This Day – 1877 Louis Renault, French businessman, co-founded Renault; 1876 13th Dalai Lama; 1809 Abraham Lincoln, American lawyer, politician, 16th President of the United States; 1809 Charles Darwin, English scientist, theorist.

Deaths On This Day – 2000 Charles M. Schulz, American cartoonist.

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