



## **AeroVironment Commemorates the 30th Anniversary of the Milestone Gossamer Albatross Flight Across the English Channel**

MONROVIA, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jun. 12, 2009-- Thirty years ago today pilot and "engine" Bryan Allen powered Paul MacCready's Gossamer Albatross across the English Channel to claim the second Kremer prize for human powered flight. [AeroVironment, Inc. \(AV\) \(NASDAQ: AVAV\)](http://www.avinc.com/gossamer_albatross) has commemorated this groundbreaking event by creating a special page on its website dedicated to the anniversary of the record flight of the Gossamer Albatross. The website includes photos, relates the story of the record flight, and includes a section where visitors can leave their comments about the event and its impact on people then and now: [http://www.avinc.com/gossamer\\_albatross](http://www.avinc.com/gossamer_albatross).

"The Gossamer Albatross is a compelling story; starting with a flash of insight, it builds on tenacity and practical innovation, and culminates in the triumph of the human spirit," said Tim Conner, chairman and chief executive officer of AV. "Paul MacCready, Bryan Allen and a dedicated team's genius and persistence combined to capture the imagination of people around the world, and invite them to think differently about what is truly possible. Paul's legacy is alive today both in the hearts and minds of those who remember that day and those who rediscover it, as well as in the work of the company he founded and led."

The Gossamer Albatross is currently on display at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.

### **The Historic Flight**

Just before 6 a.m. on June 12, 1979, with Allen pedaling at the rehearsed 75 rpm, the Albatross lifted off the make-shift runway at The Warrens near Folkestone, Kent, and headed out over the English Channel. Calm seas and lack of wind foretold a potentially worry-free flight, but soon after take-off, the trouble began. "I got a triple-whammy of failures," Allen said. First, the transmit button on the radio failed, leaving Allen unable to talk to control personnel in the chaser boats. He was still able to receive communications from them, however, and could communicate with them using hand and head motions.

Second, Allen's water supply ran out. Due to unexpected headwinds, the flight took 49 minutes longer than planned. Without adequate water later in the flight, Allen suffered leg cramps from dehydration. Finally, the airspeed instruments and acoustic altimeter failed when their batteries expired. Again, this was due to the flight taking longer than predicted. Without these instruments, Allen could not know his height above the water or his speed.

As the headwind increased, so did uncertainty among onlookers that the flight would be successful. With the far shore nowhere in sight and turbulence taking its toll, the trailing Zodiac pulled into position to hook onto the aircraft and abort the flight. In increasing altitude to allow the Zodiac to pull underneath the Albatross, Allen discovered the air was less turbulent higher up. As the Zodiac got closer to the plane, Bryan kept moving away. Bryan requested another five minutes, and then another five minutes, and then another five minutes. This went on for over an hour.

The surface wind calmed slightly and the Albatross continued toward Cap Gris-Nez, France. Persisting through equipment failures, exhaustion, and careful negotiation of the rocky French coastline, Allen landed the Albatross on the beach at Cap Gris-Nez. "There were so many unknowns on that flight that I could not be certain we'd make it, but I was certain I'd use every resource in trying," Allen said. Beyond the pouring of champagne and the Kremer prize, the flight of the Gossamer Albatross remains a story of ingenuity and heart, 30 years later.

### **About AeroVironment, Inc. (AV)**

Building on a history of technological innovation, AV designs, develops, produces, and supports an advanced portfolio of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) and efficient electric energy systems. Agencies of the U.S. Department of Defense and allied military services use the company's [hand-launched UAS](#) to provide situational awareness to tactical operating units through real-time, airborne reconnaissance, surveillance, and target acquisition. Commercial and government entities use AV's clean transportation solutions such as [electric vehicle test systems](#) and [electric vehicle fast charge systems](#), as well as its clean energy solutions. More information about AV is available at [www.avinc.com](http://www.avinc.com).

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