



Albert W. Stevens

Notable - Records

The following are excerpts from Wikipedia

He was born on 13 March 1886 in Belfast, Maine.

While flying over South America in 1930, Stevens took the first photograph of the Earth in a way that the orizon's curvature is visible. To cut through haze, Stevens often employed infrared-sensitive film for long-distance aerial shots whose subjects were visually obscured. Accompanied by Lt. Charles D. McAllister of the Army Air Corps, Stevens took the first photograph of the Moon's shadow projected onto the Earth during a solar eclipse in August, 1932.

On 29 July 1934 Stevens and two other US Army officers, Major William Kepner and Captain Orvil Arson Anderson, ascended in a specially-constructed balloon and gondola named Explorer I over north-western Nebraska in an attempt to break the current altitude record for manned flight. However, nearing the current record height, the balloon envelope ruptured, sending the gondola plunging to earth. Fortunately, all three crew were able to eventually exit and parachute to earth before the gondola crashed into a farm field.

On 11 November 1935 Stevens, along with Captain Orvil A. Anderson of the Army Air Corps, made a record balloon ascent from the Stratobowl near Rapid City, South Dakota. There were 20,000 spectators, while millions listened to a live NBC broadcast.^[6] Their sealed gondola Explorer II climbed to 72,395 feet (22.066 km), nearly 14 miles (23 km), a record unequaled until 1956.

Stevens was twice awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross – one award each for his two famous balloon flights.

He died on 26 March 1949 in Redwood City, California.



Explorer II gondola in the National Air and Space Museum